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VOL 17 | ISSUE 1 | JANUARY 2015

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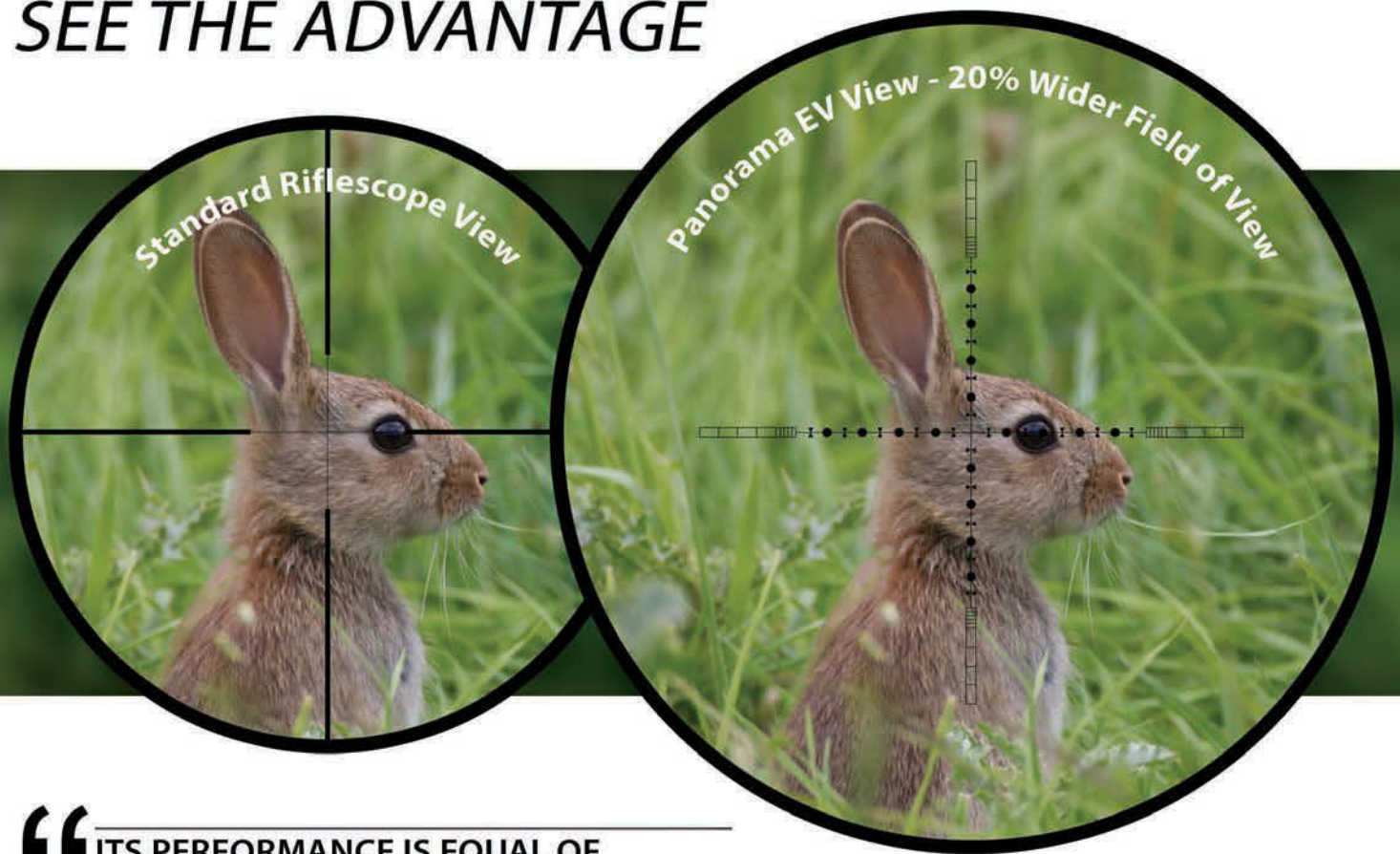
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Sizes: S-XXXL

SRP: £68.00



2014 Done & Dusted

By the time you read this we will be into December and the issue after that is February 2015, so this is the last one for 2014 and thanks for supporting us and I hope you will continue to enjoy Shooting Sports! 2014 has been an interesting year with a number of high or low points; depending on which side of the fence you sit. Agencies changed hands with Sportman Gun Centre getting SIG 522 rimfire and fullbore hunting rifles, Edgars picked up German Sport Gun and Chiappa! Norma's 6xc cartridge appeared and I am into phase 2 of reloading for it as dies and a rifle are finally available. A milestone for Suffolk Rifle was the launch of the new M1 Garand straight-pull, reviewed in this issue. Swarovski's patent on a 6x zoom scope was overturned by the European Patent Office, meaning Leica can now continue with their Magnus model. However, Swarovski have stated they are not giving upon the fight just yet, so who knows? The upshot of this is that Zeiss's new 8x zoom range scope the V8 is now in the UK and I have been sent one to test for the Feb issue and it's very impressive. So a happy Christmas and prosperous new year to you all – shoot straight and let's be careful out there...

Peter Moore



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FUR & FEATHER **FOUR LEGS OR TWO** **P80**
SAVAGE'S MODEL 42 CAN DO

VOL 17 | ISSUE 1 | JANUARY 2015 £3.75

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MORE BANG FOR YOUR P P38
REMINGTON EXPRESS

INTO THE BUSH
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FIRST UK TEST
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Airgun Hunter
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Shooting SPORTS

EDITORPeter Moore (01206) 525697
E-mail: peter.moore403@ntlworld.com
p.moore.shootingsports@gmail.com**EDITORIAL ADDRESS**Shooting Sports,
Aceville Publications Ltd,
21 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Road,
Colchester, Essex CO2 8JY
Website: www.gunmart.co.uk**GROUP****ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER**Vanessa English
Gun Mart, Shooting Sports & What Gun!
21-23 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Road,
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T: 01206 506247 F: 01206 500226
E: vanessa.english@aceville.co.uk
W: www.gunmart.net**ASSISTANT****ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER**Zoe Baker (01206) 506248
E-mail: zoe@shooting-sports.net**ADVERTISEMENT EXECUTIVE**Ed Jackson (01206) 506243
E-mail: ed@shooting-sports.net**ADVERTISEMENT DIRECTOR**

Tony Phelps

DESIGNERSSteve Streeting, Lee Francis, Donna Blowers,
Hayley Underwood & Ben Kemp**SUBSCRIPTIONS**Telephone: 01795 414672
Email: shootingsports@servicehelpline.co.uk
Address: Shooting Sports
800 Guillat Avenue, Kent Science Park
Sittingbourne, ME9 8GU
Overseas Number: +44 (0) 1795 414672**SUBSCRIPTION EXECUTIVE**Lisa Harvey (01206) 505922
lisa.harvey@aceville.co.uk**ON SALE**

First Friday of the month

REPROGRAPHICSMS Typesetting & Design,
1 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Road,
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COVER PHOTOGRAPHY

Pete Moore

And beyond...



**Sierra Infinity 7
their latest and
very comprehensive
ballistic package**

Sierra's newly released Infinity Version 7 Exterior Ballistics offers an easy to navigate interface designed by shooting enthusiast and Microsoft® software designer, Rodney Korn. Like Version 6, Infinity 7 allows users to generate multiple trajectory charts and graphics, point blank range, calculate zero, uphill/downhill shooting, maximum range, minute

of angle, profiled wind improved atmospheric, revised print formats trajectory in mils, gun database and more. It computes ballistic data based on the calculations of renowned Sierra ballistic consultants and retired chief scientists Ted Almgren and Dr. Bill McDonald. It's compatible with Windows® 8, 7, Vista, XP, or Win2K and is available as stand-

alone software or packaged with Sierra's 5th Edition Reloading Manual in either a printed or digital format. Software users are encouraged to check the Sierra Bullets website at www.sierrabullets.com for downloadable software updates and additions.

Contact: Henry Krank & Co Ltd, 0113 256 9163



BLASER ACADEMY GOES BRITISH

Set up seven years ago, the Blaser Academy provides first-class shooting tuition for novices, seasoned stalkers and hunters. Its philosophy: the right coaching, training and practice are keys in developing full potential. With eight professional shooting coaches on board in Germany for rifle or shotgun, Blaser Academy believes that a professional instructor will help build and hone a shooter's skills.

Andrew Venables, owner of WMS Firearms Training has 35 years of experience in shooting training, wildlife management and hunting. This, combined with his passion for continuous shooting improvement, make him a perfect match and natural member of the Blaser Academy Team.

Robert Sajitz, CEO of Blaser Sporting Ltd said: "The Blaser Academy and Andrew Venables share the same goal: empowering shooters to become the best shot they can be. We are delighted to welcome Andrew to the Blaser Academy and look forward to working with him so shooters in the UK can benefit from his tremendous wealth of experience and knowledge."

The Blaser Academy UK starts in 2015 with training weekends at WMS on 28/29th March and 11/12th April 2015. Bespoke private Blaser Academy training days can also be arranged. Interested parties may contact Andrew Venables for further details. www.wmsfirearmstraining.com www.blaser.de

The battle is over, or is it?

Following a three-and-a-half year legal dispute, the European Patent Office (EPO) has revoked the European Patent 1 746 451 held by Swarovski Optik – meaning Leica's Magnus riflescope can now be sold in the UK.

It was originally claimed Leica infringed the disputed Swarovski patent with its Magnus riflescope. Conversely, Leica always maintained that the relevant patent was not legally valid. This legal opinion has now been confirmed by the decision of the EPO Board of Appeal.

Stephan Albrecht, Director of the Sport Optics division at Leica Camera AG, commented: "Patents are for protecting innovations



and developments but should not prevent free and fair competition. Standing shoulder to shoulder with other leading sport optics manufacturers, Leica Camera AG has continuously stressed that the patent held by Swarovski Optik KG does not protect any specific innovation; instead it describes something already known by all manufacturers to be state-of-the-art. We are very

pleased that the European Patent Office agrees with our opinion and that the sale of our products will no longer be impeded by this dispute."

The first shipment of Leica's Magnus riflescopes are due to arrive in the UK imminently.

Contact: Edgar Brothers Ltd, 01625 613177 <http://shootingports.edgarbrothers.com>

AIR ARMS NEW WEBSITE AND YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Air Arms have announced not only the launch of their brand new website with regularly updated news features, but also their YouTube Channel with fortnightly programming. Alongside its online store, the new look website has product reviews, regular main features and ambassador articles from the likes of Pete Sparkes and James Osborne. With featured products and its link to the impressive Air Arms TV YouTube channel, air-arms.co.uk is looking to



Air Arms taking advantage of the media

be an interactive experience not to be missed.

Air Arms TV is the new YouTube channel that will show fortnightly programming. Air Arms Field will feature a different hunt each episode using new products. Air Arms Gear will

review in detail the wide range of products available from the company. Both air-arms.co.uk and Air Arms TV are live NOW so get online and check out all the new features available!

Details:
www.air-arms.co.uk

DOUBLE JEOPARDY

Ideally suited to the humane dispatch, the Bond Arms Ranger II Derringer is a double-barrelled, single-action, break-open pistol. The CNC-machined handgun features



The new Bond Arms Ranger II Derringer offers a practical humane dispatch weapon for hunters

interchangeable barrels, an automatic extractor, rebounding hammer, retracting firing pins, a cross bolt safety catch and comes with a leather holster as standard. Distributed by Edgar Brothers the handgun is available in .357 Mag/.38 Special which is highly suited to dispatch of injured large animals, such as deer. It also comes in .22 WMR, which is perfect for animals in traps and a .410 version is due to be available shortly.

The Ranger II is classed as a Section 5 weapon for transport purposes but is a Section 1 firearm once it is sold to the certificate holder. This means anyone with the relevant authority on their FAC can own this useful animal management tool. Derek Edgar (MD) commented: "There are over 80,000 road traffic accidents involving deer each year, with many animals injured and needing to be quickly and humanely dispatched. The Ranger II is perfect for this type of work and is an ideal tool for deerstalkers, many of whom are contacted by the police to help with this process. It is also highly suitable for others who need to carry out humane dispatch such as hunt masters, slaughter men, vets and zoo keepers." Prices from £850

Contact: Edgar Brothers Ltd, 01625 613177
www.shootingsports.edgarbrothers.com

HEAD BANGERS

BUFF® products will offer something to all country sports enthusiasts, from shooters and anglers to hikers, gamekeepers, runners and riders, no matter what their chosen environment. Designed to combat the elements with style and comfort, whether it's glaring sunlight or stormy seas, pesky insects or biting cold, the BUFF® collection will keep you out there longer, looking and feeling good.

The 2014/15 collection available boasts new additions including the highly sought after Mossy Oak licensed prints, keeping you comfortable and hidden from your prey. This range is perfect for many shooting applications including stalking, pigeon shooting and general pest control. BUFF® products are distributed to the country sports trade in the UK by John Rothery (Wholesale) Co. Ltd.

About John Rothery (Wholesale) Co. Ltd.

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THIS MONTH IN BRIEF

SWAROVSKI STILL SWINGING

Despite the European Patent Office revoking the European patent for SWAROVSKI OPTIK's Z6 optics, they still feel there are legal possibilities that they can and will use. This means that in their eyes these proceedings are ongoing and not yet completed, with the outcome still open.

PRACTICALLY PERFECT?

Edgars have just announced the latest Hatsan practical shotgun – the semi-auto Tactical Raider is similar to their earlier guns in this class but now offers a detachable box magazine. In 2, 5 and 7-round capacities with all the usual features, pistol grip, iron sights etc. it looks to be well priced and will be available soon.

Edgar Brothers Ltd, 01625 613177

HUNTING FOR HEROES INITIATIVE

West Highland Hunting has launched a 'Hunting for Heroes' initiative enabling injured ex-service personnel to take advantage of an exclusive 25% discount on roe and red deer stalking on Scotland's west coast. Visit: www.westhighland-hunting.co.uk

ACPO EXPLAINS

Due to the nationwide bad feeling amongst shooters caused by ACPO's recent comments on random gun inspections and suggesting that gun owners should be checked for signs of radicalism or terrorist behaviour, has done little for a harmonious attitude. They have now sent an explanatory letter with some amendments to their original comments which we have printed in this issue; we suggest you read it!

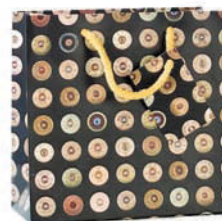
SHIELD gets Leapers

Importers of the popular Smith & Wesson M&P 15-22 rifle, SHIELD have just announced they have picked up the distribution of Leapers products for the UK. Leapers/UTG are a Chinese company and make a huge amount of items with a wide range of optics (scopes, red dots and lasers) along with accessories for a lot of popular modern rifles – AR15, AK47 etc, which includes grips, butts, bipods, forends, scope mounts, light and laser mounts, gun bags and the list goes on. Leapers/UTG has been handled by a few UK companies before but none have realised the full potential of their massive and comprehensive product line. Ken Savill (SHIELD) told us: "We are going to be putting the best selling products onto our web site shopping cart in the next few days and then be rolling out the rest of the product range (nearly 800 items) over the next few weeks." We have been told we will be getting items to test.

Contact: SHIELD, 01297 678233 (for nearest stockists)
www.shieldpsd.com



Crimbo paper for the shooter and fieldshooters in your life



It's a wrap!

Despite the market being flooded with wrapping paper, there has never been anything specifically for fieldsports enthusiasts. That's why Countryside Greetings has launched a fun range of shooting and equestrian-themed wrapping paper and luxury gift bags. The brainchild of renowned countryside photographer Charles Sainsbury-Plaice, the unique range features two different shotgun cartridge designs, pheasant plumage and a montage of colourful rosettes for horse lovers.

Printed in Great Britain on quality 130-gram, silk-finish paper, each gift wrap set includes two sheets measuring 50x70cm plus two gold self-adhesive tags. There are two different sizes of gift bag – one designed specifically for wine bottles and another measuring 23x11x23cm.

Wrapping paper - £4.99

Wine gift bag - £2.99

Gift bag - £3.99

Visit: www.countrysidegreetings.com

Get ready for the BSS 2015!

The British Shooting Show continues to grow year on year and to meet the demands from the world's finest manufacturers, a further hall has been added. Now a huge exhibition area consisting of five halls, all aimed at bringing you the very best the shooting industry has to offer. Now running over three full days. Whether you are interested in shotguns, rifles, airguns or airsoft, with over 300 exhibitors to date, we are certain there is something to interest everyone. Add to this the vast array of optics, shooting accessories, gamekeeping and gundogs etc

the visitor is presented with a greater choice with many genuine bargains and 'show only' offers.

Visit the industry's leading manufacturers and distributors and get the very best professional advice and information direct from the people who know and understand your needs, ensuring confidence and satisfaction in your purchase. The show's continual development ensures your visit is as enjoyable and memorable as possible with a new comprehensive road traffic signage system, car parking marshals, 2 main

entrances to the exhibition halls.

New for 2015 is the field and rural life stages; Visitors can sit in the comfort of these new areas. Taking the stage will be representatives from the shooting industry's professional bodies also including demonstrations covering a variety of rural subjects. Details will be regularly updated throughout the show to keep you informed of 'who's on and when'.

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Stainless Sporter Pictured

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- * Magazine conversion (5 or 10 Shot)
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- * Adjustable bipod
- * Sonic 45 Moderator
- * Howa hard gun case
- * Special Nordic Wolf Engraving



Blued Varmint Pictured

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Box Magazine
S/Action only



This rifle stock is tailor made for competition hunting. A full and lowered forend gives a good grip and helps improve the standing shooting position. The grip has a six degree angle to the side to aid the shooter to an ergonomically correct position. The comb and the recoil pad can be easily adjusted with push buttons - the Speed Lock system. This unique system allows you to quickly adjust the length and height of the stock between shooting positions; no tools needed! At the lowest comb position any bolt can be pulled from any system. Both the comb and recoil pad can be fully removed. All stocks is provided with a 0.5" Limbsaver/GRS recoil pad.



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PETE WADESON'S CHRISTMAS AIRGUN PRODUCTS

It's A Rap

Manufactured from aircraft-grade aluminium and specifically designed for fitting optics with 30mm body tubes to any Theoben Rapid series of PCP air rifle. Sportsmatch's 30 Rapid two-piece mounts secure to the action using the same integral mounting holes as those fitted as standard plus cleverly feature two mounting points in the bases to allow for optimum eye-relief. Top notch and they're guaranteed for life.

Contact: Sportsmatch UK Ltd, 01525 381638
www.sportsmatch-uk.com



£49.95



£249

Wide Eyed

Many airgun hunters using PCP's already appreciate the zero-eye relief MTC Viper Connect 3 – 12 X 32 not only for its amazingly wide field of view but the features packed onto its 30mm body tube. These include a side-position PA dial, low profile 1/4" MOA cover capped turret adjusters, 12-level rheostat control, fast focus ocular with detachable rubber eye-piece extender and integral front lens cap. Image quality is superb, and it offers the option of a useful multi-aim-point AMD (Advanced Mil-Dot) reticule or SCB2 (Small Calibre Ballistic). There is now also 3 – 12 X 24 SL with all the original features but a more slim line (SL) 24mm objective lens build.

Contact: office@mtcoptics.co.uk **Phone:** 08448 009929

Heavy hitter

Rating requires a pellet that's going to transmit the maximum stopping power possible and the .22- only Webley Verminpell are ideal for the job.

Weighing in at 14.3-grains the typical flat head design is built to do what it quite literally says on the screw top tin. That is:

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Contact: Highland Outdoors
0845 099 0252

www.highlandoutdoors.co.uk



£11.99

Call of The Wild

The squirrel is possibly the most vocal animal of any hunters quarry species and at times it pays dividends to make use of this. The Primos Squirrel Buster comprises of a bellows section at one end and 'the exhaust' at the other. It comes with an instructional mini-CD describing precisely how to use it for optimum results. It's surprisingly effective at creating sounds ranging from barks, chattering squeaks and high pitched squeals. 'Squirrel speak' that at times could well sound the death knell for many a tree rat.

Contact: BushWear, 0845 226 0469 www.bushwear.co.uk



£16.95

£118

Light & Bright

A compact, lightweight gun light is a must and Fenix's TK15 S2 Re-chargeable Tactical Torch Kit includes everything you need to light up, mount up and go. The black anodised, aluminium body measures 135 x 25.4mm and weighs 152g (excluding batteries) and is waterproof and impact resistant. A push button at the front accesses the 4-brightness settings plus strobe and a 'last light level used' memory function. There's an ON/OFF switch at the rear along with a stock-mountable remote.

Price: £118

Green or Blue Filter £5.95 each

Contact: The Photon Shop,
02921 157162, www.fenixlight.com

Ammo Store

With the wide spread availability of pellet pouches there's no excuse to just drop ammo into a pocket. Measuring 4 1/4 x 4 3/4" The Bisley Pellet Pouch is made from hard-wearing green nylon, with double strengthened trim for extra rigidity. When the Velcro fastening front section is opened, both sides articulate out to reveal a spacious, smooth, waterproof lined inner 'ammo store.' The top is cleverly designed to be folded back onto itself to form a generous size belt loop.

Contact: www.bisley-uk.com



£6.95

BG folder

IA strong, compact folding lock knife is a must for any airgun hunter. The Gerber Bear Grylls Scout Drop Point, Part Serrated folding lock back measures 4" closed with an overall length of 7.3" with the high carbon, stainless steel blade is deployed making this a tough piece of field cutlery.

The ergonomic textured rubber handle maximises comfort and reduces slippage as does the jimping along the rear spine, with a large finger choil ensures a very sure hold. Dual thumb studs facilitate one-handed opening and a metal clothing clip allows an easy uni8versal carry.

Contact: Gerber 01506 406 277
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SUPER TROOPER!

Pete Wadeson tests the 'chopped down' version of BSA's flagship, multi-shot PCP the R-10 Mk2 Super Carbine and finds it difficult to part with...

Not too long back I reviewed the BSA R-10 Mk2 and in that favourable piece I mentioned it would certainly be good to see BSA offer a shorty version and hey presto – here it is – the boldly named R-10 Mk2 Super Carbine. As with the standard full length rifle it can be purchased in the three stock options - walnut, black edition and woodland. The black version is not only eye-catching, but the option I'd choose if buying the rifle for myself, so without further ado – here are my views.

OVER-MOULDED

Incidentally, the walnut stock is currently only available as a right hand option while the other two are of an ambidextrous design. Something I'm sure will appeal not only to south paws as it makes the rear of the stock feel more comfortable for tucking into the shoulder. All however sensibly retain the integral sling swivel studs, while the woodland and black edition have a rubber over-mould that fully envelopes the dramatic sweeping lines of the beech timber beneath.

With that established the 'over-moulded' models now have a relatively high and quite substantial ambidextrous cheekpiece fitted with a sliding height adjustable black rubber butt pad. The slim neck has a nicely sized thumb shelf and the pistol grip drops down at the perfect angle giving your hand the ideal base from which to operate the trigger. The forend is quite chunky and perfectly sized in length to accommodate the shortened action ending in a semi-Schnable tip as it reaches and slightly goes under the buddy bottle. As is the nature of this type of stock material it has a non-slip (grippy) feel but extra grip aids are

seen as three panels with impressed chequering on either side of the pistol grip and forend.

CHARGE FOR IT

The 'Super Carbine' uses a removable 200cc buddy bottle to store the compressed air but for on-rifle fills or more usefully 'top ups' there's a neat inlet valve port on the underside of the stock adjacent to the air pressure gauge. This takes a Quick Fill probe (supplied) and has a recommended fill pressure of 225bar. This gives 200 plus shots in .177 calibre and 240 plus in the .22 rifle here on test.

Like its big brother, it has the now familiar uninterrupted flat receiver for scope fitting, making this one of the few rifles where you don't have to struggle to fit almost any optic of choice. I chose to scope up using a Hawke Sport HD 3 – 9 X 50AO Mil-Dot IR in high mounts which during test proved to be a sensible pairing for handling and balance. The rifle comes with BSA's own VC (Variable Choke) 'calibre specific' silencer already screwed onto the shortened 12" fully floating tube. Even with this effective can up-front the Super Carbine lives up to its name as it still

The relatively high and substantially sized ambidextrous cheekpiece also has a sliding, height-adjustable black rubber butt pad.



The cocking bolt is generously sized and operates smoothly



Classed as a semi-match unit, the 2-stage trigger can be fine tuned for even the most finicky of tastes – note the manual safety lever above



Here we see the magazine retaining catch closed and the colour coded magazine securely seated in its deep set housing in the left of the action

only measures 37" from butt to muzzle making it a very compact customer.

UPGRADED CLIP

The Super Carbine runs on BSA's up-graded 10-shot removable magazine familiar to all PCP's on their roster. These also now have a calibre colour-coded, high impact polymer inner rotor (exposed part of the rotary drum). It's also numbered and indexes around more smoothly and positively than the original all-metal version. If not familiar with this magazine, pellets are placed into the empty chambers rotating the inner 'carrier' anti-clockwise until all ten are filled.

The mechanics that secure the magazine, cock and load the rifle are as you'd expect exactly as found on the full length rifle. To cock and load, first slide the large, finger-friendly serrated edge magazine retaining catch (positioned just forward of the action block on the left) and pull back the generously sized, rear-mounted cocking bolt. The magazine now easily lifts out of the left hand side of the action block.

In my previous test of the full length rifle I also praised the semi-match grade trigger. It can be fine tuned for even the most finicky of

tastes including angle of shoe position, length and weight of pull. However, you are going to have to pull the action out of the stock to access the mechanism to do so! It also has an easily accessible well placed safety lever positioned above and to the left of the action.

PEDIGREE PERFORMER

During test, using quality ammo, the rifle soon showed its pedigree as it made ragged one hole clusters at my 30 yds zero. It was here I was able to assess BSA's shot count claims and as pellets didn't drop off the aim point at the target after 250-shots I'd say they're pretty much on the button while that strange looking front/top, action-mounted air regulator is certainly doing a better job. I say 'better' because it's been tweaked to give an even more impressive shot-to-shot consistency.

Well they do say 'be careful what you wish for' because although I mentioned in my previous test of the full length R-10 that I'd like to see a carbine version they've definitely not disappointed, as in my opinion it's a sure fire winner in every department. The stock perfectly complements the shortened action and sensibly scoped up I feel it's by far one

of, if not the best handling carbine size multi-shot PCP's currently available. Highly accurate and with a huge shot count at your disposal this is a gun that can fulfil virtually all airgun hunting duties you will encounter. In fact I'm so smitten with this rifle that I'm soon going to part with one of beloved SuperTEN's and replace it with what really is a 'Super Carbine.'

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Name:	BSA R10 Mk2 Super Carbine (Black Edition)
Type:	Buddy Bottle, Multi-Shot PCP
Action:	Bolt operated
Stock:	Ambidextrous beech sporter with black rubber over-mould
Length:	37" incl silencer
Barrel:	12"
Weight:	7.4lbs un-scoped
Calibre:	.22 on test, .177 and .25 available
Trigger:	2-stage, 'semi-match' multi-adjustable
Price:	SRP£780
Contact:	Spare Magazines £45 BSA Guns Ltd www.bsaguns.co.uk
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Green is the colour

Jack Pyke has steadily added to their range of traditional style, outdoor clothing, **Pete Wadeson** investigates the changes and additions...

Jack Pyke's original Countryman Jacket and Trousers have been up-graded! The trousers are now manufactured from a heavier duty cotton canvas. Reinforced with 600D, fully waterproof, Oxford Cordura at the knees and seat, there are two front upper lined hand warmer pockets, two cargo pockets with cleverly designed one press stud fasten overflaps and a rear zipped pocket. These fasten at the forward section only and have a canvas tab for ease of opening. The flap is partially stitched at the rear to reduce the problem of items sliding out if you are sitting at an odd angle. The waist band is part elasticated at the sides, has a generous amount of belt loops with front button fastening and zip fly. They now feature superior adjustable Velcro ankle straps and closure is by a button and zip fly. Mesh-lined they are ideal to be worn alone or under over-trousers.

NEW STRIDES

Complimenting these are new over-trousers! Manufactured from a 'HARD SHELL' (a 600D waterproof nylon), and lined with Breath-a-tex - a durable high tech fabric designed to be completely water and windproof yet breathable. The design is unique as running up the entire outer side length of both legs are two, strong, double-ended zips with a full storm flap and



Detail of the full zip off and top fastening capabilities that make the over-trousers so easy to put on and off

Velcro fastening tabs to keep mud away from the zips.

At both sides of the waist at the point the zips end are two Velcro tab fasteners and two heavy-duty press studs. The waistband is elasticated and features strong belt loops for good measure. Security at the ankles is catered for by a 3-position strong press stud ankle adjuster. This makes them one of the best types of over-trouser for quick and easy ON/OFF in the field.

TOP HALF

The Countryman Jacket is also manufactured from HARD SHELL material. Generously cut it has a full length double front zip and press studded storm flap. Up front are two 9 x 8" bellows pockets, with double press stud over-flaps and two open-topped, fleece-lined hand warmer slots set above with rain covers. The detachable hood has a wired peak and adjuster cord fastening. External Velcro straps allow it to be adjusted to fit your head too.

Wrists can be Velcro-closed and a draw cord is integral; to the hem. As with all garments in the range all seams are fully taped making the Countryman Jacket 100% waterproof.

To compliment this attire is a jumper and for those who prefer traditional-style wellies.

FLEECE JUMPER

The jumper, which is more a fleece jacket with its full-length zip is note-worthy due to its quality and reversible design. One side is manufactured from a knitted mix of 30% wool/70% Acrylic. Worn in this way it has suede shoulder and elbow pads, two zipped handwarmer pockets and two internal zipped pockets. Turn it inside out and the other side is



The Countryman Jumper/Fleece is a fine standalone garment, due to its build quality and water/windproof properties

made from a light green, 100% polyester non pil fleece. It shows the same pocket configuration and looks stylish due to the knitted wool mix collar and cuff. To make it even more practical a windproof membrane is integrated into the build.

If the weather isn't that cold there are plenty of light to medium upper body clothing from the company that you can use to build a layer system for regulating temperature. There's also a wide selection of headwear and just as many options of gloves that suit this traditional outdoor clothing.

{ TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS }

Prices

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RECEIVER: Rear locking; high tensile steel with hardened locking lugs; sized for magnum rimfire; compact length; recoil lug; 2 piece bases.

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[HFT DIARY]

Cambridge, Buxted and That Boy Rudy!!

Mark Camoccio covers a couple of comps and wonders about the new rising star in HFT...

National Hunter Field Target competition rounds are roughly one per month, which works out pretty well, since it gives us a few weeks in between, to practise, investigate any

problems, and experiment with new kit. Yet with round 8 held in Cambridge, at the tail end of September, followed by round 9, at Buxted in Sussex only a few weeks after, it has seemed busy of late!

UKAHFT ROUND 8, CAMBRIDGE, SPONSORED BY HULL CARTRIDGE

The Cambridge club, based in Shepreth are well known for their varied target layout! With the usual mix set over woodland, and even a section across the unprotected dry mud of the field, wind direction and terrain all had to be taken into account. I managed a 55 on the day, which as it happened was highly respectable and as the first time out with my Air Arms FTP900, I was left quite heartened. Especially as a freak incident with dirt in the side lever, had ruined my concentration at the start!

Barry Smith shot solidly with his BSA, to take the round, with an excellent 58, proving that his slow progression in scores of late has been no fluke. Top shot, Richard Woods, was another notable score, and his recent switch to using a British made Impact Airguns GSX600 in place of his Steyr, has caused quite a stir. So 3rd place overall with a 57ex 60 was a good start in anyone's book!

Generous sponsorship on the day, from Hull Cartridge, kept everyone's attention in the raffle, and a very happy John Miller, walked away with a brand new Weihrauch HW97K Blue Laminate version for his trouble. A very nice prize indeed.



Top shot Richard Woods has been signed up by Impact Airguns... watch this space

RESULTS:

Open Class:		
1st	Barry Smith	58ex60
2nd	Charles Peal	57
3rd	Richard Woods	57
Junior 14-16:		
1st	Rudy Goldslade	53
Junior 9-13:		
1st	Tom Willingham	49
Ladies Class:		
1st	Jill Cochrane	52
Recoiling:		
1st	Kyle Hampton	53
.22 Class:		
1st	Simon Harrison	51
Manufacturers Team Winners:		BSA

The practise range at Buxted was a hive of activity throughout

UKAHT NATIONAL ROUND 9, BUXTED, SPONSORED BY AIR ARMS

I'd never been to the Buxted club set in lush Sussex countryside near Uckfield, and the entrance into their field was enough to put anyone off, requiring a drop down a slope, into six inches of sloppy mud. Not the best of starts, but once inside, we were treated to another excellent layout of targets, which had been cleverly set out to test the amassed enthusiasts.

Shooting over a stream into dense woodland then navigating an open field section, all the time trying to calculate distance and wind speed, kept us all on our toes, and several experienced shots fell by the wayside. Stuart Farr took the open class with a superb 58 on the day, but a clear signal of intent came from young Rudy Goldslade, who has continued to show us how it's done, ever since taking the World Championship at the beginning of the year. Rudy still shoots as a junior, but steering his FTP900 to a 58ex60 at Buxted was a marvellous result - proving his grasp of the sport and sending a clear message to the rest of us!

Rifle customisation is all part of the fun, and Rudy has modified his FTP900 by removing the internal rack, barrel bracket,

RESULTS:

Open Class:		
1st	Stuart Farr	58ex60
2nd	Mike Byford	57
3rd	Neil Wakelin	57
Junior 14-16:		
1st	Rudy Goldslade	58
Junior 9-13:		
1st	Dylan Farr	50
Ladies Class:		
1st	Jill Cochrane	52
Recoiling:		
1st	Kyle Hampton	53
.22 Class:		
1st	Simon Harrison	48
Manufacturers Team Winners:		Air Arms
2014 BASC Memorial Cup Winner:		Rudy Goldslade

shroud and muzzle assembly. For him this trims vital weight from the gun, and his results suggest that it now suits him very well indeed.

Claire West and Alan George from Air Arms, were on hand in the afternoon at Buxted, to not only show off their fabulous new HFT500 model to drooling enthusiasts, but also give one away as a prize in the raffle. Andrew Burgess was the lucky recipient, and his surprise and joy capped off another great days sport.

One final point concerns next year's World HFT Championships; again to be staged at Kelmarsh Hall, near Kettering. Interest in this flagship event seems to grow significantly year on year, and entries are now being taken. At the time of writing, 170+ competitors have already registered, and with a total entry book of around 320 shooters normally accepted, it doesn't pay to leave any applications to the last minute.

For pre-booking application forms and downloads regarding competitions (where bookings are still possible), and all the latest information on anything connected with Hunter Field Target shooting, take a look at the following websites: <https://sites.google.com/site/ukahft/> and www.shooting-the-breeze.com <https://sites.google.com/site/whfta1/>

Barry Smith top scored at Cambridge



Rudy Goldslade has been putting his Air Arms FTP900 to good use, note the re-jigged action



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Mark Camoccio checks out a new airgun-specific scope from the ever growing Hawke range of optics

Hawke Airmax 30 SF 4-16X50 – a lot of glass for your buck

GETTING BETTER ALL THE TIME!

Where scopes are concerned, quality varies enormously across the board, and the old adage that ‘you get what you pay for’, is on the whole, a safe guide for realistic expectations. That said, Hawke scopes from Deben Int Ltd have carved out quite a niche for themselves in the middle to lower sector of the market, and have a big following for good reason.

As a competition buff, I was always guided towards kit that had pedigree and potential. Look to what the winners are using, and you won’t go far wrong. On that score, consider that national HFT shoots have been taken with very modestly priced

Hawke models, and it’s clear you get an awful lot of scope for the money.

PUSH TO THE MAX

The new Airmax 30 SF models are a real step up for the company, in that they are just that bit sleeker where presentation is concerned, more subtle in design and construction, and easier on the eye. ‘30’ denotes the larger 30mm body tube, whilst ‘SF’ stands for Side Focus.

My test model came specified as the Airmax 30 SF 4-16X50, and it can’t fail to impress, from the moment you open the oversized padded box. Open the lid, and the nicely packaged accessories become

apparent. Metal flip-up lens covers are threaded into each end, (similar to MTC) and the two small metal tools to adjust/remove these are also included. A side focusing wheel is part of the package too, with a third small tool supplied, to assist in its assembly.

Unlike many scopes on the market, these Airmax 30 models are dedicated airgun specific, and with a minimum focus of 10 yds, it’s a good start.

TACTICAL...

Hawke have followed the latest trend, and stuck with over-sized target turrets, which is a shame in my book, since the overall width of the scope created, can be a source of



irritation when looking for sufficient padding inside some gun cases. Huge turrets are unnecessary for most hunting trips, and certainly are no advantage where HFT is concerned, yet the visual appeal to many dictates their inclusion.

Hawke fit the rather impressive AMX ballistic airgun Mil-Dot reticule and this, being glass-etched, floats in the centre of the image. Full Mil-Dots and half mil spacing is on offer, along with segmented outer hollow posts. All this means in practise, that an abundance of aim points are available, allowing the shooter to gauge distance of certain targets, as well as take precisely aimed shots.

Red illumination of the central stadia is also possible, and here, Hawke have switched to a simplified continuous rheostat dial; although having left it switched on accidentally during my test, I have two observations. Firstly, the step-less switch doesn't automatically switch off, but secondly, when left in the minimum setting, the battery didn't entirely run down.

Fast focus of the ocular lens is fairly standard these days, and parallax focus is possible just using the left hand side mounted knob. For more accurate ranging however, a 100mm side wheel is supplied. This is attached by simply unscrewing the central cap (using the tool provided), pushing the wheel into place, then screwing the cap back into position. In addition, a sunshade is supplied for those so inclined. The side wheel works by exaggerating the gap between range markings, making them easier to read accurately.

TACTILE TACTICAL

Much time has been invested in getting the ergonomics and overall 'feel' right with this new breed of Airmax; from the off-set angle of the rheostat, to the ribbed, rubberized magnification collar. Twisting through from x4- to 16 mag is reassuringly smooth yet with enough resistance to know that everything is staying put. Likewise, those turrets, which have a crisp audible click and slick movement, yet tighten up with a top locking wheel, once zero is set.



The new Airmax SF models come nicely packaged, complete with sunshade, side wheel and the necessary tools

They are also resettable to a zero marker, once slackened off with an Allen key. My usual grid test, clicking up by a measured amount, right, down, then left, saw the shots return to the start point - proving the integrity of the spindle mechanism. To be honest, parallax ranging with the wheel did return different figures to reality (25 yds showed as about 18 on wheel markings) yet this is very common with this type of scope. What was important was the consistency of readings, and in that regard, the Airmax shined.

SO WHAT OF THE VISUALS OVERALL?

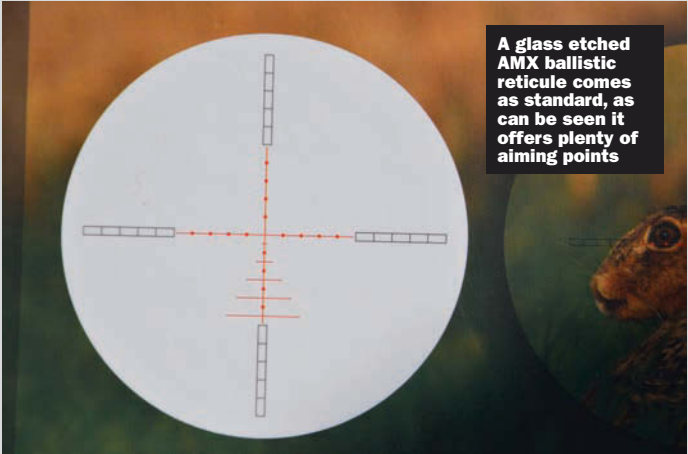
A fully multi-coated optical system means great clarity and light transmission are a given. New high quality lenses, combined with that super fine reticule offer admirable edge to edge clarity, and with no notable aberrations, the image on offer is a cut above many other scopes in this price bracket. On test, clarity through the airgun target distances was simply spot-on, and the floating nature of the glass etched reticule means the overall picture remains fairly uncluttered.

Free to access Hawke BRC and Chairgun software programs (PC, Mac, Ios, and Android compatible) allow shooters to plot their

ammunition and trajectory charts too, and it's a great tool to play with for any budding enthusiast.

Waterproof, shockproof, nitrogen filled, and the Hawke 10 year warranty, along with a built-in quality feel, mono tube construction, and pleasing aesthetics all help put a very strong case for this model; but performance is of course the key to success... and here, the Airmax SF can't fail to impress - for either hunting or HFT.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS	
Name	Hawke Airmax 30 SF 4-16X50
Reticule	AMX Mil-Dot
Weight	34.6oz
Length	14.7"
Click values	1/4" @100 yds
Field of View	23-6.5ft @100yds
Eye Relief	4"
Min Focus	10yds
Turrets	Tactical target style, resettable
Clicks per rotation	60
Full Rotations	6 in windage and elevation
Price	£269.95 inc side focus wheel, flip-up lens covers, and sunshade
Contact	Deben Group Industries, 01394 387762 www.deben.com www.hawkeoptics.com



POWER

Pete's .20 Cal FAC-rated Daystate AirWolf takes centre stage for this look at 'specialised' hi-power airgun hunting...

Pete Wadeson explains when, why and how a more considered approach can often be beneficial when using a hi-power air rifle for specialised hunting situations...

PLAY

With the choice of hi-power 'super-airguns' now available, I feel it high time I began to address the subject of how to use any FAC-rated air rifle to be more versatile at unleashing the extra-power they offer. In past hunting articles I've sometimes featured my much favoured .20 Calibre FAC Daystate AirWolf and it has undoubtedly proved itself over hill and down dale... Shooting Blue Hares in the Highlands of Scotland, to tricky brancher shooting in the Black Country. All have been well documented so I'll mainly use this rifle as an example to illustrate 'adjustments made' for certain hunting situations - one being what determines my set zero, and as you'll soon discover this is dictated by many more factors than just the rifle calibre and the power level it's running at. I also feel you

should carefully consider the scope you choose to fit to any FAC-rated gun – specifically the reticle design it holds. Before we had as many options of multi-aim-point reticules as we do now I used to use a standard Mil-Dot. Choose and use right, because a suitable optic will help you

achieve the precision accuracy a modern day hi-power air rifle is capable of.

EARTH & WATER

I'll begin by briefly relating what happened 'behind the scenes' to achieve the Blue Hare challenge I set myself. Previous to the trip, I spent a long time practising on home turf, honing up on my accuracy skills at different ranges with its usual set zero of 50 yds. So off I went, confidence levels high in my shooting ability and chosen rifle/scope combo but upon arrival, I realised my previously set zero would have to be changed. Let me explain:

I'd never shot over ground as rough as that of the high Glens. Thankfully the gamekeeper/stalker who helped me attain my goal strongly suggested I take a 'few'



Carefully consider the scope for an FAC-rated rifle – specifically the reticle design. Suitable multi-aim-point types will help you achieve the precision accuracy these super-airguns' are capable of



ADAPT YOUR ATTACK



THE VENOM STRIKE IS A FULLY ADAPTABLE GUN LIGHT, WHICH WAS DESIGNED AND DEVELOPED IN THE UK BY NIGHT MASTER. Its main features include rapid brightness control with a rotary tail switch; colour control with changeable LEDs; and beam control with a fully focusable head - from a tight spot to a wide flood beam.

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practice shots over Peat Hags on similar terrain nearby and at awkward angles on targets set on higher or lower ground from my shooting position. Only then did I fully come to realise the effect topography and indeed water can have on a pellet's usual and expected trajectory – and that applies to any power of air rifle.

My shooting was quite noticeably affected to the point I decided to set a 40-yd zero and lower my cut off point for longer range shots to approximately 70 yds. Not far? Well you try it when the wind can swirl back on itself, and the ground can suddenly drop 20 – 30 yds down between you and the target, and then include water in the equation plus angle of fire and well... Getting a little more than tricky isn't it? My hosts advice and my adapting to the situation proved to be the right move as I achieved my challenge and I learned much from my madness or should that be all that 'earth and water.'

Incidentally, I didn't/couldn't use ballistic software to ascertain what the trajectory should be – obviously due to the terrain I was shooting over. That meant after setting a new zero it was done 'old school' with targets set at 5-yd intervals from my shooting position to fully suss out my new trajectory.

JUNGLE WARFARE

Another example of the benefits of tailoring the rifle to suit a certain hunting situation is again one I've written of previously but not how and why I specifically set the rifle up for this trip. The shoot was when I was invited for a

Mission accomplished thanks to 'adapting' to the hunting situation not forgetting choosing the right tool for the job...



This picture clearly shows the type of terrain that can play havoc with the trajectory of an airgun pellet fired at any power level

spot of brancher bashing in the Black Country by my mates at Sandwell Field

Sports. Now initially you'd think there's no big deal there. However, a few days prior to travelling down I'd noticed the trees at my local rookeries were far more advanced in leaf than usual for the traditional '12th May – brancher day.'

I realised this might not be as easy as it was back in the day. Yes, the days when it was like shooting fish in a barrel as branchers clung onto almost bare twigs or the side of clearly visible nests high above. As expected, when I reached my destination the wood the rookery was in was even more advanced in yearly 'bloom' than back home – in parts the canopy above was so dense you could hardly see the nests never mind the birds!



A change of pellet can sometimes help an FAC rifle achieve optimum performance, Air Arms Field in .22 calibre (16-grain) at 30 ft/lb resulted in my Theoben Rapid being more versatile for certain hunting situations



FOCUSABLE HEAD:
The Venom Strike head can be screwed in or out to produce a very wide flood beam for close-in shooting or a narrow square beam for longer range shooting.



CHANGEABLE LED:
Adapt your attack by using a different LED. White, red, green and infrared (IR) LEDs are available and changing them takes seconds.

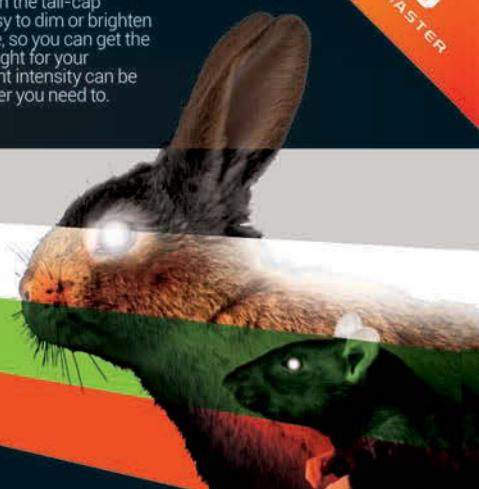


MEMORY FUNCTION:
When you adjust the beam intensity, the Venom Strike remembers that light level. So when you switch off and on again, it will activate at the same beam intensity.



ROTARY TAIL-SWITCH:
A rotary switch on the tail-cap makes it very easy to dim or brighten the Venom Strike, so you can get the right amount of light for your situation. The light intensity can be adapted whenever you need to.

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FORWARD THINKING

Now due to forward thinking I'd taken my '.20 Cal FAC Wolf,' as well as a legal limit 12ft lb air rifle – the reason being a simple and practical one. I knew the branchers we'd see would soon wise up and simply hide 'behind' the foliage of upper leaves. I'd also previously set a 30 yd zero due to the closer range shooting I'd be doing and had practised at very steep upward angles at leaves on trees.

Now the other airgun hunters shooting with me that day were crack shots but with only 12ft lb air rifles the chances they got as the birds sussed how to hide soon dwindled to almost none. With my more powerful Daystate at times I could smash through a few leaves and very small twigs to bring down the crafty wanna be rooks.

Nothing had changed in terms of the familiar brancher crick in the neck and aching back from continually looking up and taking high shots. What had changed though was due to my superior firepower my tally accounted for two thirds of the day's bag. Why I took that rifle on that trip should now be obvious. With a 30 yd zero, the trajectory is very forgiving even for steep and awkward angle shots. Plus

I could take full on body shots because the power the pellet was fired at easily gave enough 'oomph' at the target to bring the birds crashing down stone dead.

AND FINALLY

I hope this article has helped dispel the notion that FAC air rifles are little more than big boy's toys or the lazy-man's air rifle. Hopefully many of you reading this now realise any calibre and power level of FAC-rated gun has its limitations and certainly isn't a 'magic wand' to long range success. However, use the extra power at your disposal correctly and they can become even more versatile especially if you fine-tune your combo using guide lines and examples of specific hunting situations I've previously outlined.

There are many other instances and tips I could relate such as the difference a change of pellet weight can make. Suffice to say, I hope to return to this subject at a later date to offer more advice and one last thing I must say is we should feel privileged to have a myriad of 'specialist' hi-power air rifles to choose from.



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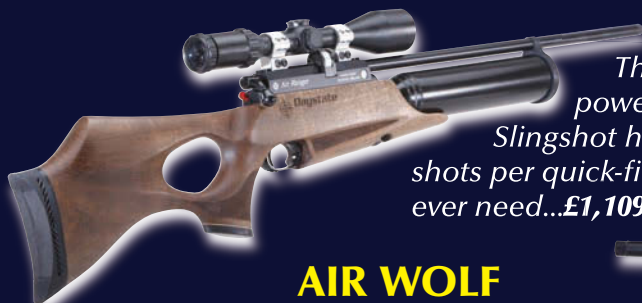
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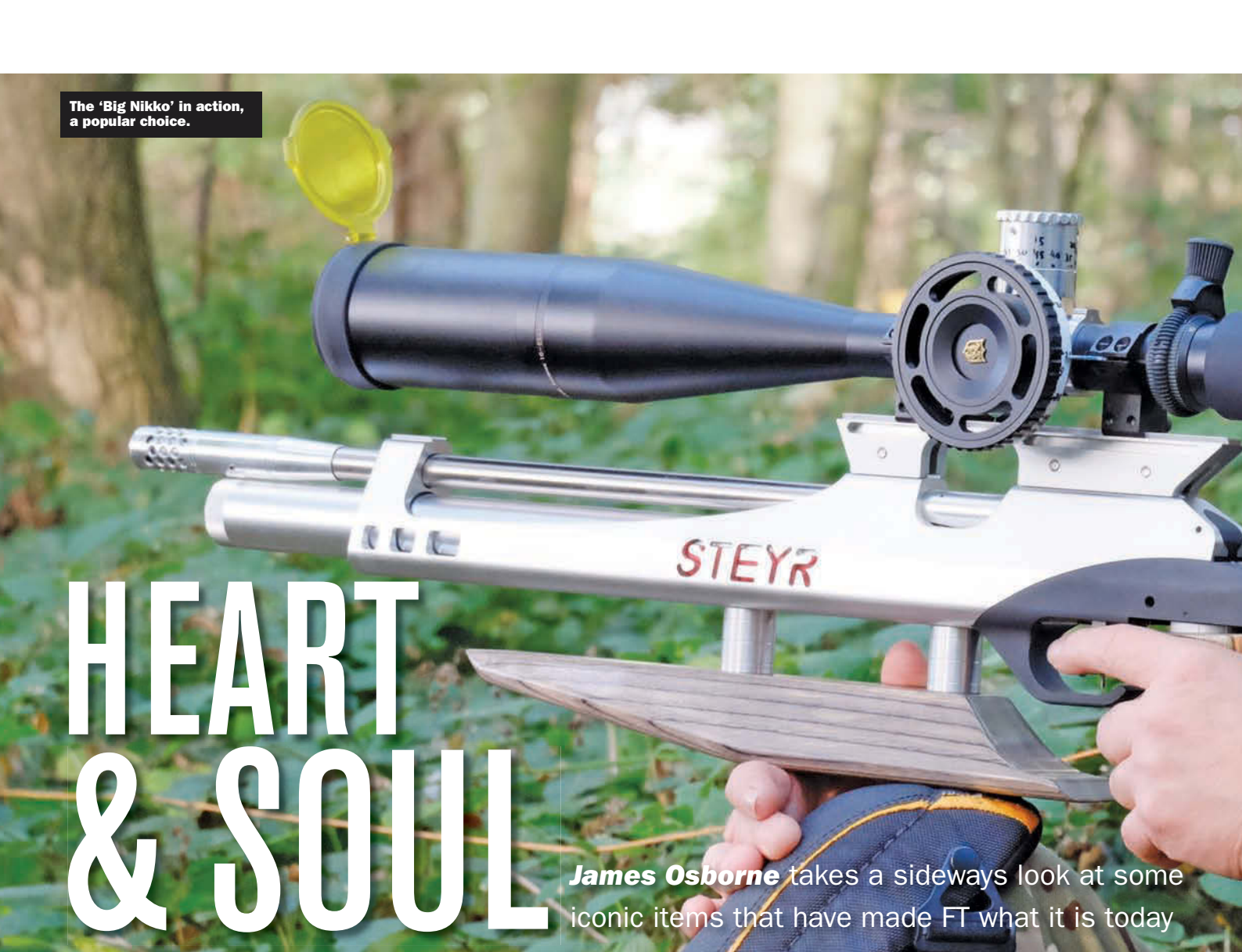
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The 'Big Nikko' in action, a popular choice.

HEART & SOUL

James Osborne takes a sideways look at some iconic items that have made FT what it is today

In my humble opinion I think that Field Target shooting has been around long enough for us to have some kind of Hall of Fame. Not that I am going to go down that route as my memory for names is terrible, so any thoughts I have on who should be in it would consist of shooters whose names I can remember (my own and one other), regardless of whether or not they are worthy of a place.

When it comes to equipment however I reckon I can come up a few iconic items that have shaped, or become synonymous with FT. Of course this is just my personal opinion, and a very small selection, as to what I might put in a museum dedicated to this discipline, but it is quite good fun to think back and daydream about such matters. You could even pass the time on those long journeys home from shoots arguing about this subject with your travelling companions, it has to be better than 'Eye-Spy'.

SECOND, FIRST THOUGHT

Oddly enough the first thing to pop into my addled mind when I started to think about

this subject was something that is rarely given a second thought once purchased, but the role played by my first choice cannot be overstated. This humdrum item, well the humble scope mount, not just any scope mount though, the Sportsmatch variety. Their range of mounts is huge, this wasn't always the case but even so it has always suited the needs of the FT shooter. I might even go as far as to say their standard model is a design classic in every sense! It combines function and form perfectly as all good design should. This is proved by the very fact that once fitted in between scope and rifle it can be completely forgotten about. Sportsmatch even manage to keep the price keen too, what more could you ask!

The Sportsmatch scope mount is a hard act to follow, but it seems sensible to select a scope as my next item. This is a tricky one as there are many potential contenders. From the early days of FT you could select the Tasco 2-7x32 for instance, although I feel something with range finding capabilities would be more appropriate as it plays such a big part in what we do!

CLASS GLASS

That could lead in the direction of the Premier Reticule boosted Leupold optics so popular in the 1990s, but I don't feel I need to keep looking to the past either. My iconic scope is the one I suggest any newcomer to the Sport of FT should seriously consider buying, the 'Big Nikko'. Or to give it its proper title, The Nikko Stirling Diamond Sportsman 10-50x60. This product when it first appeared on the FT scene allowed shooters to buy something capable of range-finding any target and at a very reasonable cost! That isn't to say it didn't have the odd issue, but now in its Mk 3 guise it has many fans and has been part of many a winning combination. Oddly enough I have never used one in competition but I'm not letting that stop me making it one of my FT icons.

I perhaps ought to add a gun to my list and complete a rifle, scope and mount combination. It is well known that I love my Air Arms and there are plenty of contenders from amongst their current range and back catalogue to choose from



but I won't. The obvious choice would be the Weihrauch HW77, my first rifle and undoubtedly a legend in its own right. I am going with something else entirely though and returning to Sportsmatch and their GC2. A picture of this rifle wouldn't have looked out of place next to a Sam Fox or Lamborghini poster in an air rifle loving teenage boy's bedroom. Unfortunately for me the GC2 was just as out of reach as Sam Fox or the Lambo!

QUALITY IRON

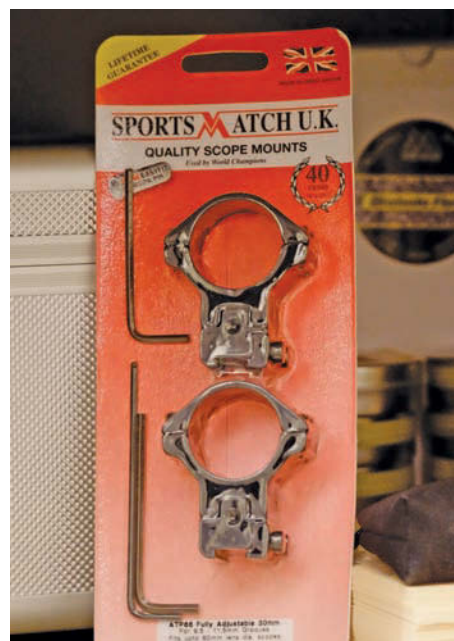
I have so far chosen relatively cheap products but the GC2 was far from that at the time of its launch and even today you would think twice about handing over your credit card for one. It did perhaps signal the way forward for FT rifles in so much as it was a no compromise design for which indeed many people were willing to pay the price as they do now for the current crop of super air rifles. I do wonder if I should seek out a second hand example of the GC2 as it is one of the few designs I haven't owned, but on balance I think I'll leave it be as a teenage dream.

Moving swiftly on I am going to include one more little item before my final choice. Butler Creek, flip-up lens caps are simply very good at what they do and once again they are very cheap. The reason I include them here though is because I think they are cool and can be seen used by snipers on screen in numerous movies, enough said.

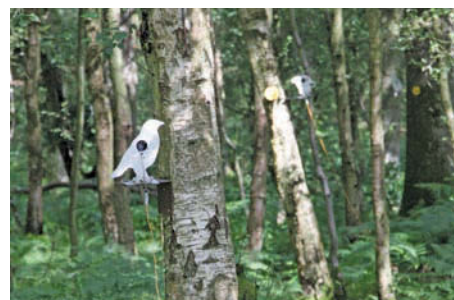
Finally probably 'THE' FT icon, what else but the Nockover target? There are many imitations on the market but when I'm looking through my scope, crosshairs lined up on my point of aim, if it is a Nockover target in the picture I know that a clean hit will take it down. If once I have taken my shot the target is still standing 99.9% of the time it will be because I have missed. As a competition shooter I want a solid and reliable target, especially as FT competitions are so closely fought these days. There is nothing worse than leaving a target wondering if it has malfunctioned. Whether in the shape of a typical airgun quarry species or simple round or square shape, for me those silhouettes are a thing of beauty.



The latest FT rifle from Air Arms, a future icon perhaps?



Sportsmatch mounts, always useful to have in your toy cupboard



No woodland scene is complete without a few Nockovers



A squirrel in its winter coat, clearly not that effective as camouflage!

No Compromise *Performer*



Competition ready and a classy performer - the Impact Airguns GSX600

Mark Camoccio checks out the latest multi-shot PCP from Impact Airguns

I've had a love and fascination for all things airgun for many years now, and it's brought me a great deal of pleasure over time. Yet it's the competitive side that really gets me going. The quest for ultimate accuracy, and the science that lies behind achieving that goal, is for me, the driving force that keeps me coming back for more.

Field Target shooting, and latterly, Hunter Field Target, are ultra challenging disciplines that demand a level of performance from any airgun, if success is to be achieved.

Small kill zones are an increasingly familiar site, on target courses up and down the country - and hitting them reliably requires consistent accuracy from any hardware.

WINNERS LIST

I was always told to take a look at the results in competition, and see which rifles are winning; and it's true to say that a list of usual suspects soon emerges. Of course we're all free to compete with whatever we want, given it fits in with the rules. But if you want to do well, then the list of hardware from which to choose, reduces

somewhat. All guns are not equal!

One such manufacturer that clearly means business is Impact Airguns, and their new range of PCP's in particular, are beginning to cause quite a stir on the competition scene. On test here, is arguably their flagship model- the Revolution GSX600, and it's a no-compromise offering, built to perform at the

highest level. Made in England, bar the barrel blank, is another plus point - so let's see if it's worth the asking price.

TARGET SPEC

On paper, the features list stacks up nicely, but get to handle the GSX600, and first impressions are equally favourable. In short, it's very close to how I would design a rifle from scratch. An adjustable match stock, solidly built PCP action, and free floating barrel, all come together nicely... and it really looks the part too!

The thumbhole target stock is made by Custom Stock in Sheffield, and is very well shaped, including a superbly deep thumb shelf to the rear of the grip. A thick lacquer seals the American walnut, whilst that rosewood cap sets off the target grip a treat. An adjustable cheek-piece/comb is a great feature, but I can't fail to mention the irritatingly sharp edges- to the point where I actually caught my hand on the front point! Subtle rounding off would be a good step here!

This rifle utilizes the old Theoben magazine design- and it works well



That issue aside, further adjustment comes with the Wegu-style adjustable butt pad, and with a super concave profile, this is no token offering! It really hugs the shoulder in the aim, which can only enhance performance where it matters.

SOLID BUILD

One look at that chunky, over-engineered breech block, and this rifle's heritage is laid bare. Theoben's reputation for solid build, and high class finish are carried on in style by Impact, and the upgraded bolt handle and scalloped breech are an indication that the company doesn't plan on resting on any previously accrued laurels.

'Free floating barrel', is a term bandied around rather freely these days, but the GSX600 incorporates a properly floating set-up, where no restriction, clamp, or O-ring for that matter, interferes with the tubes' harmonics. In practise, the barrel is thick and rigid enough to be self-supporting and left to vibrate naturally. At the muzzle, Impact fit their latest Air Tech 250 moderator, and this beast of a moddy significantly tames the muzzle crack, down to a real whisper. A secondary function of the silencer is to protect the muzzle crown, and since Impact hand finish this all-important area on each barrel, to an impressively high degree, this is an important feature. As a simple threaded screw-on fit, maintenance and barrel cleaning are easily completed operations too, which all adds to the enjoyment and practicality of ownership.

PREPARATION

As supplied, the Revolution GSX600 comes with a 17-shot magazine in .177 calibre (12-shot in .22), and it follows the original Theoben design. To load the magazine, the correct procedure is as follows: twist the lid of the cassette anti-clockwise, push home the first pellet head first, whilst preventing it from dropping out. Then chamber each pellet thereafter until the cassette is full. Push home the mag, into the hole in the action from the left side and lock down the bolt. The first shot is now ready and after that it's just a matter of cycling the bolt as required! In practise, these mags can be a little fragile, but if looked after, they work particularly well.

Next, the main air cylinder needs to be charged, and for this, the neat front valve cover is unscrewed and an external air supply (be that divers bottle or pump) is connected, via the Foster-style adaptor. It's all a neat, slick affair, and with a manometer underneath the forend, residual air pressures can be monitored when necessary.

Impact specify the fill pressure with this model as 200bar, but I found, despite a regulated action of sorts, that some initial



► shots were slightly lower powered. After charging to a slightly lower pressure of 180bar, velocity variation was slashed, from 40 fps over 95-shots, to a highly acceptable total spread of 24 fps over 70-shots. Any serious shooter worthy of the name will conduct their own tests over a chronograph, and it's well worth taking the time to do so.

HOME ON THE RANGE

As for the MK4 trigger unit fitted to these rifles, further tweaking and finishing happens at the factory stage, to ensure that all performs as it should. As someone famously fussy in this area, all I can say is that I have been mightily impressed with the triggers fitted, to both this and the GSX200 model I tested recently. A nicely shaped blade, complete with a flat front profile, and a sensitive final release, are big contributory factors in results and that's where we're heading next.

On paper, a combination of high quality engineering, Lothar Walther barrel, up-market trigger and subtle features overall, should produce the goods... and I wasn't disappointed. I'm no fan of magazines, but this one does undeniably work well.

However, Impact Airguns are aware that some shooters, especially competition minded ones, would prefer to single load pellets directly into the barrel. With this in mind they have scalloped away around the breech area so this is possible. As it stands, the operation is just a little fiddly, since the clearance isn't enormous; but apparently, the factory are looking into modifying this further to give even more access.

Hardware of this calibre needs to be pushed to the limit, so my initial accuracy testing began at 35 yds, here genuine 1/4" c-t-c groups were the norm, with Air Arms Diabolo Field ammo. Moving to 50 yds and

from a rest, text book, 1/2" groups were fairly easily come by, which says it all.

ONWARDS & UPWARDS

Top Hunter Field Target shooter, Richard Woods, has recently switched to a Revolution GSX600, and with a third place achieved at his first outing with the rifle (National UKAHT round at Cambridge), and just one point off of first place, he made his intentions clear! OK; the GSX600 is anything but cheap, but it is clearly built to do a job, and one of a select band of rifles, capable of top class performance.

As an outfit fast earning a reputation for listening and working with shooters in the field, Impact Airguns are responding to feedback, and producing guns that enthusiasts really want. The GSX600 is further evidence that this go-ahead company are on the right track, and on that basis, they deserve to succeed.



A generous thumb shelf is part of the design and all adds to control and shot release



Detail of the filling area

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS	
■ Name	Impact Revolution GSX 200
■ Type	PCP
■ Calibre	.177 (on test) .22, .20. and .25 available
■ Weight	8lbs approx
■ Length	42"
■ Barrel	14.5"
■ Stock	American Walnut
■ Trigger	2-stage match - MK4 unit
■ Power Source	180cc main cylinder
■ Fill Pressure	200bar specified - 180bar recommended with test model
■ Shot Count	95 possible, 70 consistent- see below
■ Velocity	using Air Arms Diabolo pellets: From 180bar: High 797fps Low 773fps Ave 785fps Spread 24fps over 70 shots on test from 80bar fill (40fps over 95shots from 200bar)
■ Energy	11.5ft/lbs average
■ RRP	£1320 approx Options: Left handed stock £25 extra/ left handed action £25 extra
■ Contact:	Impact Airguns, 01353 775353



The Theoben parentage is obvious

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We can repair and service the Old Theoben Air Rifles.

If any of you were following my (very) irregular series of articles on beginning airgun hunting, you'll realise that it's been about a year since my last article. This was down to school, family, exams, looking for work etc, have all played their part in keeping me out of the fields and woods.

Still, this hasn't necessarily been a bad thing. I've realised that as your time gets a lot more limited, you appreciate what time you do get out in the field a lot more. As such, my hunting has seen a bit of a shake up. Previously, before I became so busy, my hunting was, to be honest, a bit slap dash. Yes, I was wearing camo, sometimes improvising hides and I had a rough idea of where particular species were on my permission, which consists of a tiny wooded valley, some fields and a couple of acres of woodland.

BEST USE

But with my time for hunting so severely limited I decided that this wasn't enough. I needed to do something to make it more productive. So I made a few changes. Firstly, I've mapped my permission. This is something that all the professionals seem to do and from my experience all beginners should too. When I first got my permission, like many starting out, I was very keen to just get out shooting. The land owner showed me around and gave a couple of hints as to where he saw particular animals - such as a huge number of squirrels around a chicken coop. But that was about as far as I'd taken the concept of 'mapping'.

However, I've recently taken the step of sketching out the terrain on a couple of sheets of A4 and then wandering about, mapping features like warrens, dreys, nests, where I see

certain species and mapping all this with felt tip dots. The results have been surprising! On closer inspection, areas that I'd assumed were pretty empty of game turned out to harbour sizable rabbit and squirrel populations and fields that I'd always thought of as rabbit-only turned out to be home to far more pigeons (in the trees at the edge of the fields). Knowing all this means that I can adjust my tactics and approach for a certain area and in theory this should lead to bigger game bags.

GETTING TECHNICAL

As my low tech pen and paper mapping has been so useful I might investigate the BASC's Green Shoots app, which allows you to keep an electronic register on what species you see where on your permission, as well as reminding you of your boundaries are. What's

Make use of available cover and support

THE LEARNING Curve

New airgunner **Joe Punshon** is back after a long absence to show us what else he has learned



In the bag!

more, any species that you shoot or see, and subsequently register on the app, is logged in the BASC database so that they can use it to build up a species map to aid them in their conservation work - and helping out with conservation work is something that all hunters should have a go at. That being said, if like me you're a fairly low tech kind of person, then pen and paper mapping might be your best bet. I can barely turn a computer or smart phone on, let alone run an electronic mapping app!

I've also swapped my .22 for a .177. Whilst out on a hunt last November, I was trying to climb up a bank where (thanks to my mapping); I knew a sizable drey was located. The climb didn't go to plan however and I ended up taking a pretty impressive fall. Once I'd dusted myself off and checked all my limbs were still in the right place I realized that my gun was lying a couple of metres away, looking dirty, but otherwise unharmed. However, when I looked through the scope it was another story. The mounts had held it in place, but somehow the cross hairs were on an angle, the turrets had been dented and the lenses were scuffed. Not being able to afford a new one, I did what all teenagers are good at and borrowed off my parents, in this case my dad. His air rifle of choice is a Browning Phoenix Elite and so with the aid of a cup of tea and some promises of extra housework, I convinced him to lend it me on my next hunt.

177 BETTER

A couple of warm up shots to check it was zeroed and I was hooked. For a beginner like me, the flat trajectory of the .177 is a real bonus. Learning how to compensate for the more curved ballistics of a .22 takes some skill, and to be honest when you start shooting you can do without that sort of hassle! As I was zeroing, I actually began to wonder how many shots I'd missed in the field due to badly compensating for my .22? My new found love of the .177 was cemented by a cleanly killed rabbit at 30 yards - it was a shot that I'm not sure



With more suitable clothing and a dash of camo my game is improving all the time



A map or range card is a very useful item that will pay dividends



Know your ground and what it can offer in terms of both quarry and terrain

that I could have made with my .22 for the above reasons.

The last recommendation that I'd make for beginners is to investigate the company Pellet Perfect.

When I first got my air rifle, I simply zeroed it with the pellets that it came with and left it at that. But realizing how accurate I could be with my dad's .177 I thought that it was worth wringing every ounce of accuracy out of it I could by testing it with a variety of pellets. This is where Pellet Perfect comes in. For those of you who haven't come across Pellet Perfect they sell small quantities of pellets (between 5 and 20) at around £1 a pop.

COST EFFECTIVE TESTING

The low price means that you don't have that you don't have the expense of having to buy whole tins that you only use 10 or so of before realizing that they don't group accurately enough. Instead for the price of a tin you can test four or five different brands. I personally found that Crossman Premier Domes shot best in the Browning, producing tight, 3-shot groups at 20 yards.

I suppose the key question for all of this is has it improved my performance in the field? To be honest, the answer is not enormously. But, as every hunter knows, the amount of game taken is one of the least important parts. Respect for your quarry (even when it's considered vermin), improving your skills and understanding and respecting the ecosystem you are in are all far more important. However, even knowing this I was a bit annoyed. I'd put loads of effort into mapping, zeroing and generally improving my hunting skills - and yet there was no big improvement in the amount of game I was getting.

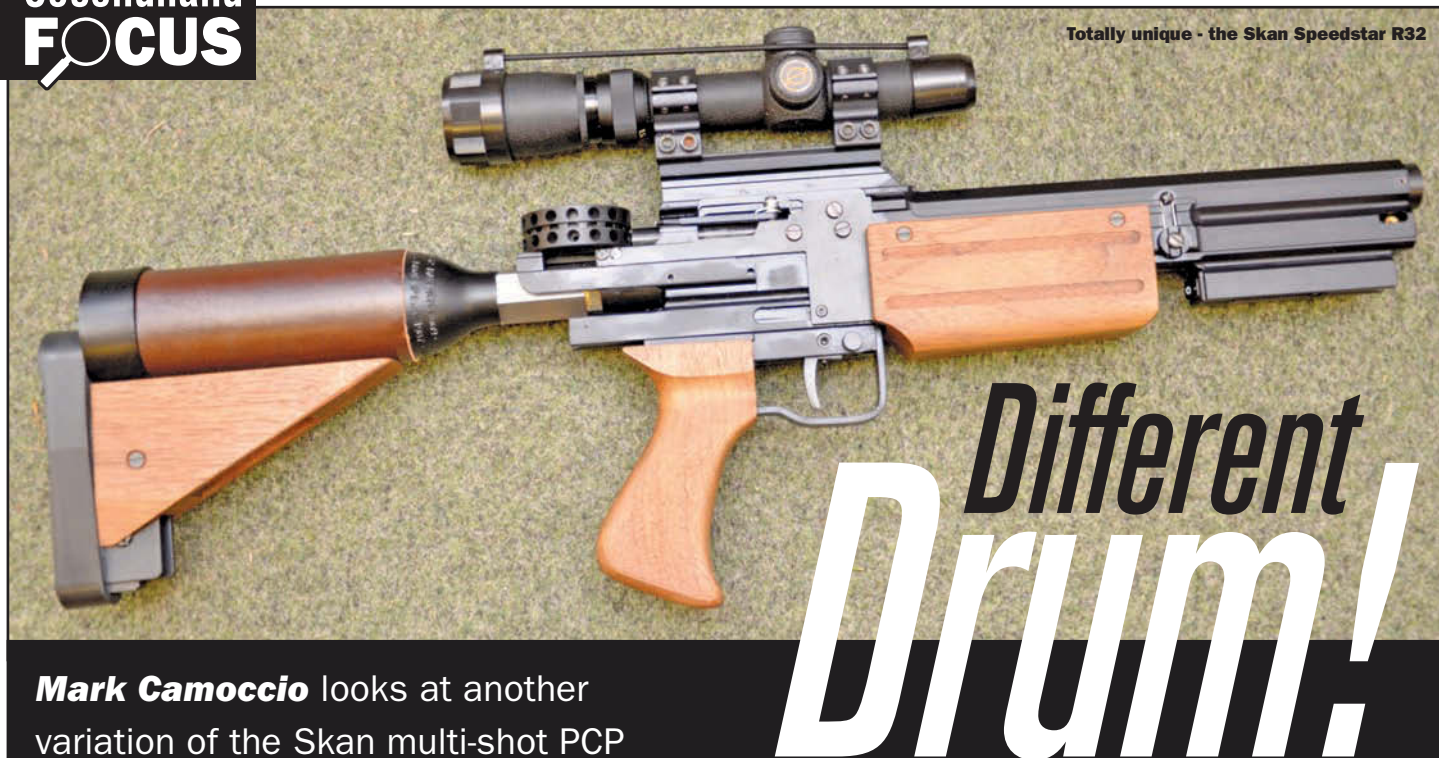
THE PENNY DROPS

Then I realized something important. Although my quarry bags had not got significantly larger, my enjoyment had increased enormously since I'd started making the changes and that's got to be the most important thing. I've recently applied for a shotgun licence and I've got another round of exams coming up, so my airgun hunting will probably go on hold for quite a while.

Still, as they seem to say on all the reality TV shows, it's been an 'incredible journey' and I've really enjoyed my first year and a half of hunting! If you don't already hunt with an airgun I'd certainly recommend getting out and having a go at it. Whether you're new to shooting or a have been at it for years, try and get yourself out in the field with an air rifle. It will challenge you, frustrate you and you'll probably come home empty handed fairly often. But it's brilliant fun and you'll come out of it a better hunter.

Contacts: PowePel pellets – Napier of London 01235 812993, www.napieruk.com Pellet Perfect, (Tim) 07794170306 www.pelletperfect.co.uk

Totally unique - the Skan Speedstar R32



Different Drum!

Mark Camoccio looks at another variation of the Skan multi-shot PCP

Skan are best known for their range of electronic chronographs (or chronoscopes for the pedants among us), but their highly innovative air rifle designs have also generated plenty of interest in their time. Highlighted here, is one of their typically unorthodox creations; in the shape of the Speedstar Mini R32 MKII, and it really is a mini marvel; if a little 'Heath Robinson'!

MILITARISTIC

Designed by Mike Childs, and first introduced in 1998, the Speedstar R32 is a multi-shot pre-charged pneumatic, offering a fast-fire action; and whilst styling doesn't follow any model in particular, there are distinctive militaristic overtones. Features are admittedly a little fiddly and eccentric, but that's all part of the undoubted appeal of these guns.

The R32's stock comes in three separate sections, made from walnut, whilst an M32 variation was also available, fitted with black rubber in place of the wood; for an altogether more 'tactical' look. Skan offered this model in either stainless steel anodised or blacked as per the example here.

This particular example (showing no visible serial number incidentally) comes in its own case, which apparently was offered as an optional extra at the time. Lothar Walther barrels were used, and an accessory rail just under the muzzle means a bipod, laser or lamping device can also be utilized.

ACTION STATIONS

Power is derived from a buddy bottle, which can be either charged in situ, or removed before charging to the prescribed 200bar. A

large 32-shot magazine is all part of the attraction with this model, and this takes the form of a double layered circular drum (2x 16-shots) which looks quite impressive in itself. Removing the magazine to fill the chambers, is a wonderfully awkward process, 'requiring the pistol grip to be pulled fully rearwards, then back slightly, whilst placing the white end of the pellet loading tool between the front of the slide plate and its recess. The pawl then needs to be pulled gently clear of the magazine, and the mag removed. Phew! In practise, it's a lot easier than it sounds, and it does all function rather well.

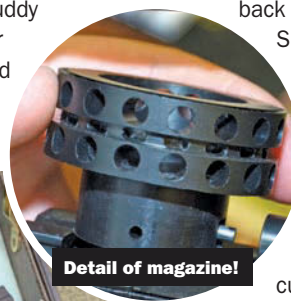
With the mag fully primed, and locked back into the action, the fun can start.

Subsequent cycling of the action is achieved by pulling back the pistol grip, then pushing it forwards again, and it really is great fun!

Production of the R32 in its various guises, ran until 2010, and if you wish to invest in a much sought after piece of airgun design, this one's currently on offer for £750, including a spare magazine, compact Simmons scope, and the case as seen.



The Speedstar breaks down into a carry case (Inset) Detail of the double stack drum magazine, which holds 32-shots in piggyback system



Detail of magazine!

Many thanks go to Andrew, CJ, and Craig at MGR Guns, and for further details on this and other guns in stock, see their website at www.mgrguns.co.uk.

MGR Guns, 1, Witham ROAD, Woodhall Spa, Lincs., LN10 6RW, 01526 351750

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Mark Camoccio believes the hype as he tests the latest Remington break-barrel springer

Budget Beater

I'd heard rumblings about this rifle some while back, and the word on the street was certainly favourable, but there's nothing like a hands-on experience to properly assess the goods. When a big name in the shooting world like Remington, put their name to a product, you would expect something a bit striking, and I'm pleased to say, that's exactly what we have with their new break-barrel, spring-powered model.

The name 'Express' comes from the fact that this rifle is released in the States, capable of producing in excess of 1000 fps with certain ammunition. Of course, any model sold in the UK, via distributor, Sportsmarketing (SMK), has to comply with the 12ft/lbs legal limit, so it's de-tuned accordingly!

DRESSED TO IMPRESS

These guns get minimal packaging in transit, so I wasn't expecting too much on seeing the fairly slim-line, simple carton arriving at my door. It's difficult not to be impressed, however, on seeing this gun at close quarters; and when you consider that a scope is also inside the box, all included in that astonishingly low retail price of £159.95, first impressions are certainly favourable. I was further intrigued simply because I'd heard those rumours as mentioned, that it was a fine gun for the money.

OK; the scope (and mounts) included is a fairly basic 4x32 spec, but it gives any prospective enthusiast a taster of using a telescopic sight. That said, the quality of this



As triggers go, this is well above average on this grade of rifle

model really does warrant better optics; so I can't see any serious shooter sticking with the freebies for long.

SMALL BUT PERFECTLY FORMED

Curiously, the Express is only available in .177, but with full power output, and a host of features, it looks set to win an army of fans. Take a look at that woodwork for a start! Apparently figured from beech, the straight line styling and striking grain and colouring, all add to the appeal. The super sleek forend includes that subtle palm-filling tip, which is extremely comfortable in the aim.

Ambidextrous configuration includes generous panels of deep cut chequering, both on the forend and pistol grip. The diamonds created by the design are particularly well defined, and an excellent grip is the result. In fact I'd go as far as to

say this is some of the best 'laser-cut' chequering to adorn an airgun in some while.

STRETCH

One point to note though, and a possible stumbling block, for shooters of smaller build, concerns that pistol grip, which happens to be raked well back. Reaching the trigger comfortably, may be a little awkward for some as a result, so try and handle this one before splashing out.

The lack of a pronounced cheek piece is surprising, although to be fair, height for correct scope alignment didn't seem to be an issue. That super hard rubber butt pad is however; beautifully applied and finished.

As for all the metalwork, the quality of the rich chemical bluing is testament to the fact that Far Eastern production methods (utilized by Remington for this Express model) are making huge advances. In short, the finish here is the best I've seen yet, rivalling European-made models; which just about says it all.

At a little over 45" in length, the Remington Express is an adult gun for sure, yet weight is cleverly kept to a fairly modest 7.4lbs. Open sights come as standard, and they feature the modern fibre optics, giving a bright seemingly illuminated sight picture, comprising a green rear notch, and a red dot

↑ FOR

Well built and shootable
Scope and mounts
included

↓ AGAINST

Not a lot

➡ VERDICT

More than the
sum of its parts
Great value for money



Cocking the Remington Express is a simple, smooth operation

foresight. These are fine in use, with twin spring-loaded adjuster wheels for windage and elevation; yet with an all plastic construction, care needs to be taken to look after the slightly fragile mechanism.

SLICK DESIGN

Where spring-powered guns are concerned, the effort taken to cock the action is of course partly dependent on the length of the barrel. A longer tube simply means greater leverage, making it easier to force the piston backwards to compress the mainspring. This is partly the reason why I've never been a great fan of the obsessional tide for everything 'carbine'. Lock-time may well be fractionally quicker with a shorter barrel, but theory goes to pot once balance is disturbed, and initial cocking effort is significantly increased.

Back to the Express, and with a rifled tube some 18.75" up front, you would expect the cocking action to be reasonably comfortable. What you don't expect is just how easy that operation actually is, and the near sensation of a tuned special!



Neat design comes with that lever-reset safety bar

Remington have clearly taken care to include recoil absorbing features into the design, and a nylon spring guide and correct lubrication are all part of the deal. Several other manufacturers really should take note, since the feel and performance of the Express, far outweighs anything expected in this price bracket.

Plaudits don't stop there either! The breech lock-up is super smooth; chambering a pellet is easy, due to the chamfer at the breech, and the automatic safety catch is yet another clever piece of design. It features a Weihrauch-style, push button release, but the clever bit comes with the fact that it can be reset by pulling back the small lever.

ON THE RANGE

With such a surprisingly slick feel to the action, I was eager to see just what this Remington was capable of down range. First up, the chrono check beckoned, and with average kinetic energy of 11.8ft/lbs recording on the monitor, with both Air Arms Diabolo Field, and Daystate Rangemaster pellets, and 10-shot total spreads of 14 and



A solid lockup at the breech is all part of the design

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

■ Name	Remington Express	
■ Type	Break barrel sporter	
■ Power Source	Spring piston	
■ Calibre	.177 only available	
■ Weight	7.4lbs	
■ Length	45.25inches	
■ Barrel	18.75	
■ Stock	Ambidextrous beech sporter	
■ Trigger	2-stage adjustable	
■ Velocity	using Air Arms Diabolo / Daystate Rangemaster pellets:	
	High 799fps	High 829fps
	Low 785	Low 812
	Ave 795	Ave 820
	Spread 14fps	Spread 17fps
	(10-shot strings)	
■ Energy	11.8 ft/lbs 11.8 ft/lbs	
■ RRP	£159.95 including 4x32 scope and mounts.	
■ Contact	Sportsmarketing, 01206 795333	



A basic 4x32 scope comes supplied in the box, nothing amazing but it will get you going

17fps respectively, near text book results were an encouraging start to the proceedings.

At this point, I couldn't help but note another impressive feature of this rifle - namely the trigger. The sub £160 price bracket wouldn't normally throw up much to speak of in this department, yet the Remington has a surprise in store at every turn. The broad blade is spot-on for a gun of this type, and whilst there is some creep, the mechanism releases after only a modest pull weight. Further fine adjustment (a skill that sadly eludes me) will I'm sure have a big effect, yet considering the Remington's asking price, the subtlety of the design is excellent.

And so to performance. An incredibly muted muzzle report, almost no spring resonance, and a satisfyingly snappy action as the shot releases, was a huge surprise as mentioned, but superb accuracy (genuine 1/4" groups c-t-c) when I did my part, shot from the over-arm FT stance over 30 yds, was the icing on the cake.

CONCLUSION

In short then, the Remington Express would make a great hunting rifle, or beginners gun assuming that reach to trigger, and overall dimensions suited. In my book, it cant fail to impress... at any price. Take another look at that RRP tag though, and I reckon it has to be considered one of the all time bargains of the year!

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www.rangesports.com

Safe & Seen

Mark Camoccio looks at some essential safety equipment that some shooters might not consider

Protecting ones eyes should never be taken lightly and certain scenarios dictate the use of protective eye wear. CO2 airguns for example; many shooters are regularly using this medium and with BB's often the ammunition of choice, ricochets are common. Being asked to lend a hand at a recent indoor pistol promotional event for scouts, found me reaching for safety glasses, and in these close range situations, it is very difficult to eliminate ricochets altogether.

PREMIER AT RANGESPORTS

Rangesports are well known for their ever increasing selection of shooting accessories and eye protection is something they haven't overlooked. In the spotlight here are the Premier Plus Shooting Glasses, which are the real McCoy for those who take safety seriously.

The Premier Plus specification includes the main frames, five different coloured lenses, wide nose grips, and an additional prescription lens holder. They come supplied in a zipper case with individual soft slips for each lens, as well as a belt clip to keep everything to hand.

For the indecisive, the choice of five different coloured lenses could be tricky, me I just wanted as clear as possible - to allow for a full view, with no dimming of the subject. As well as chronograph duties, my glasses will also double for protection against high speed insects on bike rides, so this is a nice feature, where the brightness of a fine day doesn't want to be lost.



Note the full, wrap-around style, ideal for shooters wanting full protection and a degree of style too

IMPACT RESISTANT

Lenses are constructed from impact-resistant, 2mm, optical grade, lightweight polycarbonate. They're specified as UV400, offering maximum protection against UV rays. The five colours: red, yellow, blue, black, and clear, were chosen to enhance contrast in various conditions. Rangesports said their dealings with several Olympic grade shooters has revealed that personal taste plays a big part; with the full range of colours finding favour.

Changing the lenses is simple and whilst I was initially confused, in the absence of any guidance notes, a careful pull in the centre, along with a twisting motion soon releases them from the frame. A wide rubber nose grip (anti-allergenic temple fitting), contoured to provide a comfortable, shake-free fit, is all part

of the design, which also helps to avoid the stress that can cause headaches, according to the manufacturers. Stability is ensured, when following fast moving targets, when clay shooting for example.

As for those neat additional prescription lens frames, the idea is that if and when required, an optician can fit lenses of your choice. This assembly then sits behind the main frame.

SAFETY FIRST

So there we have it- quite the best shooting specs that I've encountered and well designed, for serious work. A microfibre cleaning cloth is supplied and overall, the Premier Plus Shooting Glasses certainly get my thumbs up. In fact I've even put my money where my mouth is on this one!

The all-inclusive kit includes a frame for prescription lenses



FOR

Well priced
and effective

AGAINST

Not a lot

VERDICT

If you take your
shooting seriously
get safety glasses



With five different colour choices, cleaning cloth and pouch the Premier Plus is a cost-effective package

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PETE MOORE'S CHRISTMAS GENERAL PRODUCTS

Micro Marvel

Spyderco's Dog Tag Folder (C188ALT1) takes its inspiration from the US military ID disc. Its single-sided handle is titanium and uses a ball and integral, bar, slip lock (non-locking) for its 1.23", CPM S30V steel, sheep's foot blade complete with opening hole. At the top of the handle is an aluminium strap that defines blade travel and provides protection from the edge when closed. It weighs 0.9oz and can be worn around the neck as there's a hole for a chain. Despite its size it's a fully functioning micro knife! Colours black and green/blue.

Contact: Edgar Brothers Ltd, 01615 613177
www.spyderco.com



£61.27

Carry All

Napier's 'Razorback' range bag holds all your shooting gear. Its LAMTEC' outer shell is bonded to a waterproof membrane, high density 10mm foam padding, EVA TOUGH SHELL and a soft 'Syn-fleece' lining. ARMOUR FLEX panels provide protection and comfortable non-slip rot proof shoulder straps and GRIP LOCK handles. A 'Weather Seal Guard' protects zips and seals the enclosure when closed. It measures 12 x 9 x 10", externally there's two 7 x 7 X 2" zippered side pockets. Inside there's a divider that can be positioned by Velcro straps.

Contact: Napier of London
01235 812993,
www.napieruk.com

£99.00



1911 A1

Remington's 1911 RAC CO2 is a BB-gun and an exact replica of the Colt 1911 A1 45 semi-auto pistol. The build is aluminium alloy, with a phosphate finish and brown, chequered, plastic grips. Controls look and function like the original. Feed is from an 18-shot magazine that holds the CO2 bulb. You can expect 30+ full power shots. Sights are a fixed blade and windage adjustable U-notch and it's the accurate up to 10m. Overall a pleasing and exact replica of an icon design.

Price: £109.95
Spare magazines £29.95
Contact: Sports Marketing Ltd,
01206 795333 (for nearest dealer)

£109.95



Custom plugs

Auritech offers Universal Fit Hearing Protectors with a special ceramic filter allowing normal speech yet protection against gun shots and have now added a cost-effective custom moulded option. You have to get your ear moulded, which they do at game fairs etc. Once done they are sent to their laboratory and turned into your very own custom fit plugs complete with the aforementioned ceramic filter system. They come with a carry case and cleaning tool and are colour-coded left and right. Light and effective they will not break the bank and do the job.

Contact: Auritech, 01483 516434, www.auritech.co.uk



£120



£229

Bushcraft/Hunter

This bushcrafter offers three options - Large Bushcraft/Hunter, Medium and Junior Bushcraft. Made from 01 tool steel at 56 Rockwell with scandi grind, it has full tang construction with a choice of riveted, wood or stag handles and a lifetime guarantee! The Hunter (shown) is a drop point with a 5.5" blade and 10" overall. The edge is marginally hollow ground with a deep ricasso at the rear that effectively acts as a finger stop. Fit and finish is good and it comes with a basic leather sheath with fire steel loop.

Prices: Stag handle £229, Rosewood £173
Contact: Gary Wines Knives, 07743 936952
www.winesknives.co.uk

H-STYLE BIPOD

Aim Sports as well as producing optics also offer a bipod. Called the H-Style, spring tension bipod it's made from aluminium and high carbon steel with a black hard anodised finish it's a cost effective design! It comes with an adaptor that allows mounting to either directly a Weaver/Picatinny rail or standard, QD sling swivel stud. Featuring telescopic legs, it offers a lot of adjustment. Weighing in at 1lb it's worth a look!

Contact: Viking Arms Ltd,
01423 780810 (nearest dealer)



£35.00

Gorilla

We shooters love to take photographs and some form of support can only improve the picture. Light, portable and versatile are the Gorilla Pod Tripods from Joby. Leg sections are made up of individual swivelling joints so not only can it be used as a tripod they can also be wrapped around things like tree limbs for a support. The head offers a camera thread adaptor stud, with QD plate complete with spirit level bubble and can swivel and angle through 360°. A number of models and options are available including a mobile phone adaptor. They can easily mount a video camera or even a small spotting scope or monocular. They are available from most photographic outlets.

Contact: www.joby.com/gorillapod



£17.00

Muddy Girl

Aimed at female and younger shooters Hatsan's Escort Magnum Muddy Girl semi-auto shotgun is distinctive! This 20-bore uses a smaller chassis commensurate with its calibre and has a 26" barrel as standard. It includes multi-chokes and butt spacers to adjust COL. It features the usual controls plus a magazine cut-off, useful for changing loads without having to unload! What makes it stand out is the Muddy Girl camo pattern, which is different. In use it gives little away in handling or effectiveness to a larger 12-bore and is easy use with pleasant recoil. At under £500 it's a bargain!

Contact: Edgar Brothers Ltd: 01625 613177 (for nearest dealer)



£469

Smooth Operators

Snugpak's Merino Wool Socks are not only soft, warm and comfortable thanks to the in-turned welt and extra padded sole, but durable too! The reinforced Achilles cushioning in strong polyamide makes them the ideal choice for outdoor activities and the outstanding ventilation they provide helps keep feet dry and comfortable. They have gentle grip sections which support the feet and make sure they stay in place and the fine toe seam reduces the risk of blisters. The super fine Merino wool is blended with polypropylene and Lycra® Elastane to provide a relaxed, comfortable fit.

Contact: Snugpak, 01535 654479 www.snugpak.com



£10.95

Spring-loaded

Not being able to find an item in your pockets, or worse putting something essential down and losing it is a pain! Well no more as Maxpedition's Tactical Gear Retractor is on hand. It's about the size of a pocket watch and the tough casing houses a spring retractable, 48" length of Kevlar cord with a QD steel loop at the end. At the other is a QD shackle to attach the keeper to your gear or clothing, plus a cable lock. In use the mechanism exerts 10oz of force so could be used for items like small binos or rangefinders.

Contact: Heinnie Haynes, 033 0300 0400, www.heinnie.com

£14.95



Gun-mounted

iON camera's CamoCAM™ is designed for gun/scope mounting to provide a compact video camera and is Realtree, camo-covered. Compact, it includes a fixing clamp for either barrel or scope and uses a 14-megapixel sensor delivering superior image quality while capturing up to 60 frames per second HD video. One-touch-recording allows fast and silent activation. A 180° lens provides a wide field of view, and long-life battery - up to 2.5 hours recording time. There's also an additional Wi-Fi PODZ™ accessory that allows users to upload videos to social sites via iON's iOS or Android apps for smart phones and tablets.

Contact: www.ioncamera.com

£235



Winter Warmers

The Grub's neoprene range boasts more than 23 different boots for riding, shooting, fishing, farming, dog walking etc. Comfortable and self-insulating with thermal properties, the neoprene upper is soft which adds to the comfort and their 100% stretch ensures a fit for most calves. Models offer different levels of insulation including the addition of a Highloft fleece lining so that they can perform

at varying temperatures. There're a number of different soles to ensure grip and traction across a variety of surfaces. The removable foot bed also adds comfort and thermal protection!

Contact: Grubs, 01279 418052, www.work-lite.com



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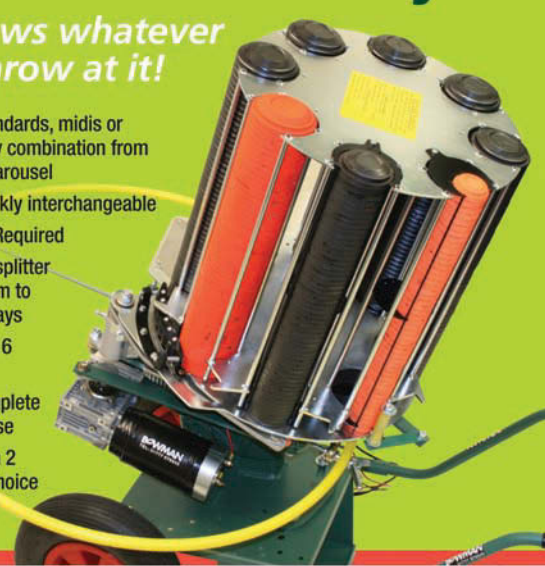
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A small selection of Enlan's range of folders, build quality, design and materials are good and the prices amazing!



Innovation & Excellence

Pete Moore looks at the range of Enlan folders and is blown away by the quality, ability and most of all price

Chinese-made knives, in the old days were very easy to spot and usually a case of once tried always avoided! Being poorly made and generally incapable of holding an edge for more than 5 minutes! They looked OK-ish, which was about as far as it went, but these days their blade industry is a whole different thing! So if Spyderco are happy for selected companies from the PRC to make some of their products and the whole of their Byrd range then it's safe to assume

that they can now produce cutlery worth serious consideration.

NOTHING OVER £18

Blades & Bows import a Chinese brand called Enlan and sent me 17 examples of their craft and with nothing over £18 I thought oh no more cheap crap from the Far East! Well I was very wrong indeed and had to take a mental check pace and get my head right before I continued as they're a serious eye opener! All

are locking folders and the blades are made from 8cr13Mov steel hardened to HRC 58-60. Given the aforementioned maximum price point some models show G10, rosewood and micarta handles as standard. I doubt if £18 would cover the cost of those materials on Western made products either?

With 17 models and just two pages I am not going to do every single one, so will cherry pick across the range as some are quite similar, with others being unique.

First up the EL-19A Rescue, it has a 7.9cm sheep's foot blade with opening slot and is liner-locked. The black G10 scales are well textured and the top of the frame and rear of the spine are jimped for extra purchase. At the base of the open-topped frame is a hardened steel glass-breaker, with a seat belt cutter hook and screwdriver/bottle opener swinging out from the top. A stainless clothing clip completes the layout and all that for £16.99.



EL-19A RESCUE
£16.99



M017S
£6.49

The M017S is a rather striking looking, hi-tech design with a stainless steel frame with green, G10 inserts, 6.6cm, hollow ground drop point blade and a liner lock. Opening is by ambidextrous thumb studs and at the rear is a small lanyard hole. The build is robust and is 8.9cms closed and 15.9cm open, all that for just £6.49.



EL-04MCT
£14.99

Ridiculously good looking is the EL-04MCT. With its green/black Micarta scales on a stainless frame you might think that £50 would be a fair price. The 8.5cm blade is a drop point and shows twin, ambidextrous thumb studs for one-handed operation. Locking is by a pull-back, axis lock that pushes a bar behind an angled shelf to the rear of the pivot point. With a clothing clip and 20cms open and 11.5cm closed this is a solid and elegant design at £14.99.

The M011 is a more classic design with wooden scales on a light stainless frame. The modified drop point blade is short at 7.1cms and it folds to a compact 9.4cms. Locking is by a liner and there's a single thumb stud on the left of the blade. With a clothing clip it's more a gentleman's folder; cost well £6.49.



M011
£6.49

Big and tough is the EL-03A. With a skeletonised stainless frame and black G10 scales it's a decent handful for hard work. The big drop point blade shows some serious jimping on the spine and ambidextrous thumb studs for easy opening. Locking is by a large liner and there's also a big clothing clip along with an integral lanyard hole. A lot of knife for the money at £14.99!



EL-03A
£14.99



M07
£5.99

Keeping it simple and practical is the M07. With black G10 scales and a 7.3cm, liner locked drop point blade this is another small pocket folder with ambidextrous thumb studs, clothing clip and lanyard slot at £5.99 it will not break the bank!

I love Tantos so the LO1-1 caught my attention. With a combined Tanto/drop point, 8.7cm blade locking is by a liner and opening is by a bi-directional disc bolted to the rear of the spine. The black/grey Micarta handle is quite blocky and vertical, zig zag grooves provide a sure grip. A clothing clip completes the build at just £9.99.



LO1-1
£9.99

SECOND THOUGHTS

There are a couple of unique, ultra lightweight folders but the other models are very much variations on the theme of

↑ FOR

Well made with quality materials

↓ AGAINST

Not a lot

→ VERDICT

Innovative designs
Build and quality well above the price

the eight I have looked at. For example the EL-01A is just the EL-01 but with G10 scales. But as can be seen there is a good choice and in all cases build quality is excellent with solid engagements of locking systems and all metal and handle materials well fitted and finished. If I have one criticism it's that the clothing clips cannot be reversed or inverted as to the side and end they are positioned. With the exception of the Micarta-handled EL-16 all give a 'tip down' carry position, which is not conducive as it reverses the knife

and negates easy one-handed draw and deployment.

But apart from that I can find no fault with the Enlan range and get the feeling that even though the prices seem far too cheap they will last a long time and give good service while doing so.

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A Very **British Affair!**

Pete Moore checks out the new UK-orientated shooting jacket and liner from Browning

For me one company that stands head and shoulders above the others in clothing is Browning. Their line is massive and suits all terrains and reasons. The classic example is their hunting parka, which they have been offering for many years. Made with all the usual hi-tec materials making it breathable, warm and waterproof etc. it offers masses of storage in a choice of camo patterns and solid colours. I have their Pre-Vent parkas in Mossy Oak break up, a Grande Passage in Duck Blind as well as a loden green example. The design is totally American with a removable hood and masses of storage.

STIFF UPPER LIP!

However, Browning is doubtless aware of the British market and with one eye on a more traditional approach and the other on practicality, they have launched the Windsor parka and fleece. Made of a nylon/polyester mix it's green in colour with brown trim and is rated water/windproof and



All very British, Browning's new Windsor Parka, in fact more a traditional game coat style

breathable, using proven systems such as PRE-VENT that draws moisture away from the skin.

Compared to my aforementioned parkas the Windsor as the name implies is all terribly British and will doubtless appeal to the more traditional game shooter.

Subtlety is the watchword here; the olive green body is nicely counterpointed by brown trim strips on pocket edge etc. Carriage is minimal but generous with two massive, front, bellows pockets with a scooped opening and a large flap secured by a press stud. On the side are fleece-lined and zipped handwarmer slots that can also hold small items, plus features straps that clip onto the lower pocket flap to hold it open, doubtless to assist ammo access. There's a single interior (left hand) breast pocket and waterproof one under the storm flap, both are zip-closed.

ADDED PROTECTION

A useful feature is the interior REACTOR 2 integral recoil pad pockets that allow the fitting of Browning slip-in recoil pad system into the shoulder and it really works! Closure is by a full-length, double-ended zip and studded storm flap. The collar is a medium/high, stand-up style and there's no hood nor provision to fit one – like I said this is more a traditional game coat! The cut is generous with side vents on the hem for easier movement, as too are the pleated section at the rear of the shoulders/arms. Both features offering easy gun mount! The long and wide sleeves show Velcro adjuster tabs on the outside and that is pretty much that.

On its own the parka is warm and comfortable due to its hi-tec construction and materials. However, for those colder days Browning offers the Windsor fleece vest that can be worn alone or zipped in using their X-CHANGE system to up its cold weather ability. It's a dark green/brown with light brown trim and zipped side pockets and is stylish and effective, good for warmer days on the peg and socialising too.



Windsor fleece vest zips in to add more insulation and is also good as a standalone garment for better weather

FOR

Hi-tech, English-style game coat
Well made and effective

AGAINST

This is not a US-style parka

VERDICT

Practical and more traditional design
Zip-in fleece gives it the edge in colder weather



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Double Barrel

Pete Moore looks at a new twin beam torch that incorporates both white light and IR

These days' compact gun torches seem to be offering as much as they possibly can in what is already a very product-heavy marketplace. The latest trend seems to be to incorporate twin reflectors in the same head and in doing so up multi-functionality. LEDWAVE who are a major player in this arena have now gone this route with their latest Nightstorm unit.

The design offers a fairly standard sized, mid-compact torch made from hi-strength, aluminium alloy. It measures 181mm with a 25mm body tube and 52mm diameter head, weight is a hefty 8oz. It looks no different from most of the other makes out there and I suppose it wouldn't, given the generic design we know.

HEADS UP

The head mounts a tough, tempered glass lens that covers the twin, vapour-coated reflectors. The white light side uses a 3.5 watt LED, which means a very long life with no worries about burning out as filament bulbs do. Next to this is an



The LEDWAVE Nightstorm combining a flexible operating system and white and IR outputs



The twin head offers both a white LED and an IR source

850 nM infrared unit, so if gun-mounted and using night vision no need for a separate illuminator, unless required!

The build shows a crenulated head, which stops heat build-up if left on and placed lens-down. The body tube is knurled for grip and at 25mm will be compatible with the majority of scope/torch and torch/gun mounting systems. LEDWAVE offer their own accessories too. A rubber ring is fitted so you can hold the torch between two fingers and operate the tail cap with your thumb.

ANTI-ROLL

The tail cap features a basic press ON/OFF, rubber-covered button

along with press/momentary operation. The body is configured with flat surfaces and cut-outs to be anti roll – always useful! Behind the head is an integral rotary selector switch. This give four functions/ selections – OFF, LOW POWER (30 lumen), HIGH POWER (120 lumen) and IR (infrared). It also has a battery charge indicator light. Slightly press the tail cap switch and a light set in the rear of the head comes on – green, full charge, amber half and red running on empty. Power is supplied by twin CR123 Lithium cells which are included.

Operation is simple as you select the power or light setting you require via the rotary, 4-position switch then turn it on at the tail cap. When switched OFF and back ON it will return to the last setting. You can also while it's ON move up and down the options, which is most useful. Run time is only quoted for white light with 180-minutes HIGH and 12-hours on LOW, both pretty good. In use you can expect at least 100-yards + on High beam given the atmospheric conditions.

Overall a tough and effective gun/utility torch with LEDWAVE also offering a number of accessories, like remote switches, gun mounts, filters etc.

FOR

Comprehensive design
Batteries included

AGAINST

Pricey compared to other makes

VERDICT

Good kit bit not that cheap



Detail of the mode selector ring



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First of Many?



Airgun ranges are always very popular especially with a prize gun on offer

Chris Parkin returns from the first South Yorkshire Game Fair and reckons it was a success

Any new game fair in the UK fits into a rapidly diminishing number of dates where we as shooters have a free weekend. But The south Yorkshire Game Fair held on the 4/5th of October at Doncaster racecourse is another festival of outdoor sport to tempt us with.

I went along on Saturday the 4th which is the opening day of the Pheasant, and well



The BDS stand, good to see their support!

into both Partridge and Grouse and Wildfowl shooting seasons but it was clear from the start that the organisers hoped to tempt the public from all areas within our sports to the venue. The inner halls had the usual trade stands both retail and commercial, showcasing new products and the latest deals on clothing, guns, boots, shoes, accessories, antiques, stick making and any number of other items, including some interesting aperitifs!

FAMILIAR TERRITORY

I started out in the known territory of Zeiss optics and took a look along the new lines of kit. The Conquest DL scope has been on test with both Bruce Potts and me and it was interesting to see how the public were reacting to its newest ASV turrets and updated illumination and lens coatings. The latest piece of kit on show along with other binoculars, scopes and rangefinders were the 8 and 10x54 Victory HT binoculars which



The new Atom unit from Nightmaster looks very interesting and a test is booked!

promise to offer the very best low light performance with a compact build and Zeiss' well proven durability and optical splendour.

Right next Door I found Mauser/Blaser and took the opportunity to consult Tomo Svetic in great detail about the vast array of specific iterations of rifles and shotguns, all based around the Mauser M03/M12, Blaser R8 and F3 shotgun chassis'. Tomo is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about these brands and has a good few tales to tell, with great modesty I must say, about his extensive hunting experiences from all around the world. He has walked the walk with these guns, not just learned the talk!

SWILLY HAS IT ALL

Swillington Shooting supplies had a broad range of clothing from Rivers West, Ridgeline, Harkila and others coupled with the Diotto range of boots which I have tried my best to tear to bits for the last two years with no success I'm pleased to say. Xcel cameras

took a prime position here which are designed to offer compact video camera attachment to your car, gun, quad, bike or even your own head to video your shooting and other exploits for a wider audience. It's great to see gunshops investing, and offering very good deals, on what might be considered the latest of electronic gadgetry, not just firearms. Trailcams are now extremely popular and the Xcel can do this too along with so much more in a waterproof housing for any weather.

After taking a look around the BDS stand at a few of their fantastic trophy displays and listening to numerous fox calls being squawked across the halls I paid a call to Nightmaster to look at what I had heard about from Pete Moore to be of particular interest, the new ATOM. It's a digital add on for the riflescope that when coupled with an IR Illuminator, allows you to use an ordinary dayscope to live a second life after dark. From the drawing board onwards, this neat little tool is at the final stages of evolution as full production commences later this month and after taking a look in the second floor darkroom, I cannot wait to get my hands on it. At 40 yards, resolution was good enough to see the teeth on the zipper of the jacket worn by our "model" and I have lined it up for test. Fitting to the rear ocular bell of your scope, it takes up some eye relief space and will likely suit a more upright head position in contact with the rubber eyecup but it is really good. A wireless screen can be used to display the real-time video feed if desired but I like to keep things simple and would be very happy with the digital end of scope eyepiece on my rimfire or airgun... watch this space!

MORE NV

Thomas Jacks had a vast array of Night vision kit and their stand was busy most of the day, as everyone gets ready for a long winter of pest control. LGA supplies had a vast array of conventional lamping kit on show with reloading and shooting accessories from MTM. After a browse around other retail exhibitors, I took a look at the Herpetological displays, Reptiles and Spiders to you and me! I'm ok with the former but the latter still makes my skin crawl so I applaud all the kids who volunteered to check out the beasties of all descriptions before venturing outside.

The usual gundog and Dogstar agility displays were on hand with some falconry but on the Saturday when I visited, heavy rains were dampening enthusiasm for those keen to venture outside. BASC were in attendance with shotgun coaching but as always, the under-cover Airgun range sponsored by Weihrauch was busy from start to finish. It's always a great way to safely and legally introduce young shooters to the



Lots of clothing and optics were sold along with a few guns too



Tomo Svetic at Blaser is a mine of information on both products and hunting

world of guns and today, a competition with said gun as a prize for the winner. Crossbows were quiet but Archery gained a few keen wannabee bowmen to shoot off their arrows under instruction in this ever popular sport and yes, I was tempted into having a go myself, once a toxophilite, always a toxophilite!

WHAT DO I RECKON?

The outdoor events were sadly dampened and it was sad to see the extensive kids play areas, bouncy castles and other non-shooting attractions very quiet but Sunday was promising better weather and a higher



Nightmaster demonstrated the Atom in a darkroom-corridor and in the pitch black was pretty detailed



All the Zeiss goodies were on show to compare and contrast

turnout because of it. The event is already booked up for next year and a few traders I spoke to after the show on Saturday reported they had done enough business on the day to cover their costs; Sunday was likely to make the show a financial success which is good for everyone. Food and drink at the venue was of excellent quality and value with attendance fees equally well priced at £12 with kids under 16 free. The attendees I consulted think the show may have a bright future as it has certainly dipped its toe in the waters and come up trumps, even without Noah in attendance. www.southyorkshiregamefair.com

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Lateral Thinking

And you thought that Maxpedition just made bags,
Pete Moore discovers some real steel from the pack people

I love Maxpedition gear and use it all the time, as they offer a diverse range of carry systems and accessories, so it was with some surprise I learned from the importer (Heinnie Haynes) they now offer knives. Heinnie sent me two examples the SDRP (Small Drop Point) and slightly larger MLCP (Medium Long Clip Point).

ONE FOR ALL

In truth both models are near identical with a few changes in blade style/shape, weight and dimensions, so pretty much what goes for one goes for all. The blade is made from D2 tool steel with a Rockwell hardness of 58-60 HRc and double tempered with a cryogenic treatment. The metal is bead-blasted and treated with industrial hard chrome plating to a depth of 0.001". It uses a full, flat grind with decent finger choil for address and protection from the edge. The full tang has four notches and two through holes to which the nylon over-moulded handle is cast on, an EDM non slip texture completes the surface and at the rear is a lined lanyard hole. The handle shows a half guard with a slightly tapered shape in both width and length with two finger grooves.



Whatever next? Knives from Maxpedition and good ones too – top SDRP, below MLCP, which would be my choice

“The sheath is made from Kydex and comes with a wide/deep belt loop”

The sheath is made from Kydex and comes with a wide/deep belt loop. The base is open to act as a drain hole and retention by twin lips that rise up above the throat and clamp around the base of the handle. The sides of the body feature holes so it can be lashed to your gear if required!

INDIVIDUAL

Starting off with the SDRP let's take a closer look! The drop point blade is 4.75" long with an overall length of 9.25" and weighing a neat 4.5oz with a further 2.6oz being taken up by the sheath. The blade shape is quite pronounced and did well in both edge-up and down deployment. I found the handle a little small for my hands though the texturing provided a secure grip. It's here you really appreciate the choil as it allows you to move your grip up for more palm purchase. I would have liked to have seen some jimping on the top of the spine for added thumb pressure.

The MLCP is near identical though slightly bigger with its 5.5" blade, 10.25" overall length and 6oz, the sheath adds another 3oz. Again the clip point style allows good edge-up work ideal for opening up a deer's belly and running it up to the sternum and the long, pointed tip can get into most nooks and crannies. The handle is identical but its larger size suited my hand much better as I imagine it will most men. Again jimping would be a useful addition to the spine.

Blade thickness is 0.15" for the SDRP and 0.1875" for the MLCP and in both cases with the directly moulded handle either knife came over as very rigid.

It's not about pretty; the no nonsense Kraton sheaths do the job as do the knives!



FOR

Simple and strong design
Effective field blades

AGAINST

Not a lot

VERDICT

Well worth a look

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NIGHT MOVES

Bruce Potts casts his eyes over the choice of night vision equipment offered by NiteSite



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The 5500mAh battery is conveniently housed in its own pouch and velcroes to the butt so no wires from pockets to worry about



Night Vision equipment (NV) has become so popular these days not only because prices keep coming down making it more tempting for NV virgins to take up the sport but because there are so many more good value and quality devices to choose from.

In years gone by the only NV kit you could get was the ex-military sights that weighed a ton and were expensive. Most used an image intensifier tube but with the new digital revolution it has now really opened up the market to all forms of shooting.

NiteSite saw an opening and a niche in the market and a novel design developed in the UK was born, which has proved very popular since its introduction - primarily for airgun users. Now they have updated their entire range and that consisted of the two options of the old NS200 and the original NS50; there are now four digital versions based on maximum range/versatility of use, i.e. from rats to long range foxes.

POWER RANGERS

Much like the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers they all have animal names with the Viper, Wolf, Wolf Power plus and Eagle models. However, all offer a common theme in that they can convert any existing rifle scope into a night sight in minutes. Useful too, the NiteSite requires no zero change to your scope, does not need ambient light due to onboard LED

The TV unit, this is the Eagle model sits on top of your existing scope



The three versions I had on test, left to right:- Viper, Wolf and Eagle everything from rats to foxes at short or long range



illumination, uses a 850nm IR beam along with video and audio output and is powered by a lithium battery pack.

Regardless of model the system is the same and consists of two components. A combined IR sender with a viewing screen at the rear clamps at 12 o'clock to the body tube facing forwards. The second is the receiver, which consists of a camera module that plugs into the scopes' eyepiece and literally looks down/through the body to pick up the image. This connects to the IR sender/screen unit by a cable and projects the image on to the viewing screen. In use you do not look through the rear of the scope as you would normally do, instead you lift your head and look at the screen to see your target and reticule. So the IR beam is sent out and the camera sees what is in front of it and you make the shooting corrections.

Because the NiteSite is relaying the image produced by the IR beam through your scope there is no change of zero, you can still use the parallax adjustments and even the illuminated reticule if fitted. Your reticule from your scope is superimposed onto the quarry as viewed on the 3.5" screen thus acting as your sighting system.

QUICK FIT!

Quick to use with two eyepiece adaptors for the camera unit and quick fit adaptors for



Five large IR beams can be seen to illuminate a fox up to 550 yards on this Eagle model

"Much like the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers they all have animal names"

one inch or 30mm body tubes to attach the 3.5" LCD TV screen/IR projector via cables. The battery pack attaches to the rifle's butt by a Velcro-secured pouch, which is very handy so no tangling your hands in wires from pockets. The Eagle and Wolf Power plus use a 5500mAh Lithium Ion battery whilst the Viper and Wolf use a 1500mAh version of the same. Thus Viper and Wolf for short to medium range use and the Eagle and Wolf Power plus for serious long range and sustained use.

One nice thing is that all the kit needed is packed into a solid plastic case keeping it safe in the truck until you need to use it, with a comprehensive and idiot-proof set of instructions. Just right for me then? As I briefly said it offers a

↑ FOR

Prices and models to suit your need

↓ AGAINST

Not looking through the scope might take some getting used to
Adds height and bulk
Cables might get in the way or caught up

→ VERDICT

Quick, simple and effective NV solution
Try before you buy
(see Against comments)



ONE BY ONE

VIPER

The Viper model is the shortest range sight, ideal for airguns and rimfires etc. Having said that the illumination range is 110 yards even with a single LED infra red light mounted in the centre of the lamp. As with all Nite Sites the TV screen is colour so in day time use, the bonus of any digital unit the image is realistic, but is obviously black and white at night. The power pack is actually mounted to the scope via a strap as it is light and lasts up to 7.5 hours on low IR power usage.

WOLF

This is the Medium range NV sight for use up to 330 yards on visible detection. There are now three LED infra red beams in the TV module/IR projector unit for a boosted range and image with the battery pack mounted to the scope as with the Viper. The Wolf Power Plus is the same as the Wolf but has a 5500 mAh battery instead of 1500mAh which can last up to 25 hrs on a low IR setting and is mounted to the stock in a pouch and Velcro secured as previously described.

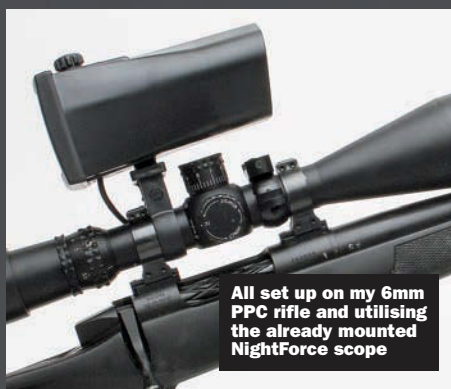
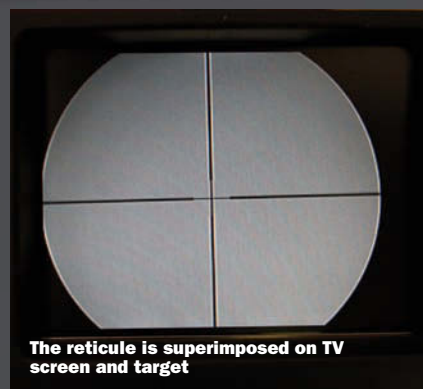
EAGLE

This is the flagship model and sports an impressive 550 yards range which is made capable from the now five IR illuminating LED's. The power comes from a 5500mAh power pack in its own pouch for strapping to the stock. It allows up to 25 hours continuous use on low power or 3 hours on full power. Each model also comes with anti glare filters that can be attached to the TV screen to reduce the glare that comes off the screen and illuminates your face.

OTHER FEATURES AND CONCLUSIONS

All models come with a re-charger and are simply plugged in and a red light shows it is charging and green when full. Time to charge is dependent on initial charge state. You can also use an in car charger for on the move re-charging and if you want to record images and sound the AV connecting kit that fits to the scope modular and attaches to hand held recorder, camera or monitor of your choice.

An interesting array of kit plus an additional hand held NV illuminator/screen viewing device which I will be testing over the coming months at varying ranges and game. Stay tuned.



mandatory head-up shooting position as you view the monitor and not one looking down the scope as you would in the traditional way. It's a bit odd at first but you soon get use to it and becomes strangely more natural the more you use it, although I do prefer the straight through the sight method.

IN USE

Set up is easy and common to all units but needs to be done properly to get the best from the NiteSite. The camera module is a colour infra red unit of 1.0 Lux 600TVL 1/3 CCD chip and is attached to the scopes eyepiece by one of the two supplied rubber double ended sleeves. Slip this on and position the camera so it covers the eyepiece and arrange vertically. On its face is the soft touch ON/OFF power button and three sockets for the DC power in, LCD screen in and Audio/Video out (optional)

You need to focus the camera so that the scopes reticule and target are in focus and this is achieved by removing the

module and on its inside is a small central protrusion with abrasive surface to grip your finger. Turn anti clockwise up to a couple of times max as the unit is set at the factory at 400mm, which is good for most scopes. Once this is done, it only takes a few attempts, it is now set for that scope.

The LCD or TV screen module that also houses the IR projector sits on top of the scope via the body tube adaptor - 1" or 30mm as required. Also be sure to fit the locking collar to stop it sliding off under recoil or whilst slung over your shoulder. On top is a large knurled knob that is only used to activate the IR beam and increases its intensity the more you turn it.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Name:	NiteSite
Prices and models:	Viper £449 Wolf £639 Wolf Power plus £699 Eagle £849
Contact:	NiteSite Ltd on (01759 377235) for more details www.nitesite.com



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FIXED BARREL QUANDARY

LETTER
OF THE
MONTH

I'm fairly new to the whole world of airguns, and having now read quite a few articles on the subject, I am still a little confused to be honest. Having looked at a variety of possible guns for purchase, I've narrowed my choice down to the Weihrauch HW80, HW97 or Air Arms TX200. Part of my confusion concerns the pros and cons between break and fixed barrel designs. I suppose my main concern is whether a break-barrel has a potential weakness when compared to a fixed build? I would really appreciate your comments.

Colin Riley

Colin

This is an interesting area, and your concerns are indeed understandable.



The HW80 is a high quality, break-barrel design that should give years of trouble-free service...

Historically, a break-barrel design, even from the top names in the business, could be seen as a weakness; where total, repeatable accuracy over a period of many years is concerned. Of course many budget guns are made down to a price, so this must be born in mind where long term results are concerned. Accepting that we are talking about quality premium brands then modern standards of engineering are such that the time-honoured break-barrel design shouldn't in itself be a problem.

That said, many designs, including the HW80, incorporate an adjustable breech, which can, if necessary, take up any slack over time. For absolute peace of mind, the fixed barrel configuration is the way to go, yet the fast fire appeal of a break barrel takes some beating too. Our ultimate advice would be that all three named guns, should give many years of trouble free use, so stick to that level of quality, and make your final choice on the basis of how they handle.

HYPOTHETICALLY

We shooters always think we know everything about firearms and I have heard many comments good and bad on guns used in films and TV etc. Some stupid others quite relevant! So, as a fan of The Walking Dead TV series what firearm (one only) would you choose to combat the zombie menace? After much thought I came up with what I think is the ultimate given only head shots will work. My choice - a Ruger 77/22, with short barrel 12 to 16" and moderator running on their 25-shot magazine. Any other 22 bolt-gun would do but the high capacity mag just gives the Ruger the edge. My reasoning: 22 ammo is the commonest calibre in the world, a moddy makes the gun quiet (always useful) and a bolt-action is ultra reliable. I originally thought about a semi-auto, but you never know when it might jam...

Tim Shepherd



Ruger 96/22 - the perfect Z gun?

Hi Tim

Or should that be Rick? Yes heard a lot of shooters talking tough about things they have no idea on. I remember one guy (never been in the army in his life) saying a 9mm pistol is a waste of time and he'd carry a 44 Magnum revolver in combat. Because that's a really practical choice I don't think! Giving some thought to your question as I like Walking Dead and have read World War Z five times now, the book is so much better than the film! My choice a Ruger 96/22 (22 Long Rifle) lever-action; faster, more instinctive cycling and can also use the BX25 clip. So does anyone else out there have an opinion; hypothetically speaking?

Cheers

PM

OLD FIDDLE

Really enjoyed your test on the Yugoslavian K98 (model 24/47) last month. So Pete are you going to take the plunge and buy it and either restore it or convert it into a classic Mauser sporter? There are some useful videos on YouTube about how to bend the bolt handle. If you decide to go the sporter route will you re-barrel it or stick with what you've got? What about the military iron sights, as they are a bit much for short range use? Anyway good luck and let us know what you decide.
Chris Adams



Hi Chris

Not sure yet. If I do sporterise it I will do it as a project and try and keep it as cost effective as possible, which is the point of a military conversion. This means initially using the existing barrel and iron sights, Boyd's do a replacement M 24/47 sporter stock in laminate for not a lot of money, which looks good. Yes I looked at some of the bolt handle conversion vids and it gave me some ideas, as a friend of mine has a TIG welder. The biggest expense will be the QD mounts in comparison to the rest of the rifle. However, having a classic, military K98-type is also attractive. I think I'll start there as the majority of work is in the stock, which I can do myself.

Short Hornet

I have a 17 hornet rifle with an 18" barrel and have had no problems with loss of speed, though I had to find the right powder that suits the rifle. I have tried Hodgdon's 'Lil'Gun' and found it to be fast at 3878 fps plus, but with erratic accuracy. I eventually settled on IMR4198. Slower burning but with very good accuracy and consistency! When reloading you really have to be very careful to get the loads spot on to maintain the consistence with the velocity. At 100yds I can shoot just under 8mm holes with a velocity of 3467 fps with a 20grain V-MAX. I am able to

hit crows in excess of 150 meters with devastating results. The rifle I have is a CZ that has had a new 18" match barrel fitted and is compact, easy to use and very accurate. What's the chance of an article on how to choose a rifle, say for deer stalking; what you consider to be the important points and why.
Rian Hannock

Hi Rian

Thanks for the heads up as we have had a few people asking about shortening 17 Hornet barrels. Yes we will put our minds to a deer rifle article.



To light or not to light?

I am in the process of getting a new scope and am not sure if I should get one with illumination or not. It seems to be the thing to have these days and I see a lot of makes offer it as standard, whereas the more expensive European makes charge extra to the tune of at least £100. Does it really make that much difference and do the multiple colour ones really offer anything extra?

Paul Tanner

Paul

It can certainly have its uses in low light situation where perhaps your reticule is a bit slim or gets lost on dark backgrounds. However, it will not allow you to see in the dark and depending on the quality and build the illumination can flare out too much and obscure what you are looking at! Most of my scopes are lit and to be honest I rarely use that facility as in most cases things look better without it. My one exception is for driven hunts where I turn my magnification down to minimum and use the centre dot (lit) for fast target acquisition. As to multiple colours, I don't like them, but it might work for people who have trouble with red, but they will reduce the rheostat adjustability.



Thanks Pottsy!

Would you let Bruce know that the recent article on the 223 rifle loads 'Let's Twist Again' was fantastic! I have a 223 Remy tactical in 20" and all the bullets he talked about I have. I was given a large selection from a recent dearly departed close friend. His article has answered my prayers for load data. I love my reloading, both for target and warm quarry and am very grateful for your response on 284-7mm. Keep up the good work, and same for Bruce.

Cheers Nick Dadamo

Hi Nick always happy to help!

PETE WADESON'S CHRISTMAS FIREARM PRODUCTS

Deer Bag Supreme

Blaser's Wildwanne is made from a tough, reinforced polyurethane material and resembles nothing more than a big rectangular shopping bag. It features wooden dowels around the edges for strength and has twin handles and QD buckles that not only secure the top but also allow you to roll it up and stow it. There's enough room to put in two roe deer and at a push four muntjac, or lots of rabbits etc. It's easy to carry and the material is strong, resists piercing and is easy to clean.

Contact: Blaser Sporting Ltd, 0207 6222116
www.blaser.de



£101



Ultimate QD

Ziegler's QD Contra Claw ZP Mounts and rings offer a guaranteed return to zero ability. The forward base shows twin locating slots with exterior, ambidextrous sprung catches, the rear has two slots. The base of the rings (the feet) shows rearward facing hooks. Locate the rear foot in the rear base, then push down the front foot so it engages and sets the locking catch in position. To remove just pull back on the ambi catches and lift the scope up/back and off. Fast, practical and effective!

Price: £450
(fitting FOC if required)
Contact: Alan Rhone,
01978 66 00 01
www.alanrhone.com

£450

GRS

GRS rifle stocks are made of a tough laminate and offer an ergonomic option for those wanting to move up to better furniture. With five choices – Adjustable Hunting, Sport Varmint (both in standard and 10% smaller Decima sizes), F-Class, Safari and Hybrid. The Sport Varmint (shown) offers an off-set pistol grip for a natural hand and trigger finger position and fully adjustable comb/cheekpiece, length of pull, finished with a Limbsaver recoil pad. Available in a number of colours and inlets for most popular rifles they represent a superior design in every sense of the word.

Price: £529.99 (Sport Varmint)
Contact: Highland Outdoors, 0845 099 0252
(nearest stockist)
www.highlandoutdoors.co.uk



£530



£700

SIG-U-LIKE!

There has never been a better time to buy a SIG522 semi-auto rifle as prices are brilliant. There are three models all offering a side-folding butt and Picatinny base – Classic with military forend and iron sights, SWAT with 4-way forend (both 16.6" barrels with flash hider) and Target, round forend and longer 20" in a free-float forend plus comes with mounts and a x4 scope. Guns come with a Black Dog magazine 25 for the Classic/SWAT, 10 for the Target. Also included ambi controls and last round hold open

Prices: Classic £499.99, SWAT £599.99, Target £699.99
Contact: Sportsman Gun Centre, 01392 354854

Better Mousetrap

The Primos Trigger Stick 2 is probably the best triple stick available to date. Leg adjustment is controlled by a pistol grip that mounts a V-rest. All you do is press the trigger and the legs extend and stop when you let go. The height spread is good; easily accommodating a 6ft + shooter, or down low to turn into a wide tripod for a more stable base. Rubber feet make it secure on any surface. The grip rotates through 360° making changes of position easy. A 2-point rest can also be fitted, which is worth the effort!

Prices: £129.99, 2-point rest £49.99
Contact: Bushwear, 0845 226 0469 www.bushwear.co.uk



£130

Fibre Provider

A-TEC's Carbon02 reflex moderator uses a carbon fibre outer and weighs 11.28 oz. Due to heat build-up it has a temperature sticker that shows when it gets too hot by turning black (around 10-12 rounds). Stop shooting and wait for it to cool and you're back in business. If you ignore this the second, 'STOP USE' dot turns black, which means you have exceeded and voided the warranty and the outer tube must be replaced. It's unlikely you are going to kill 10 deer that quickly so no problems, but it's light and effective for the weight-conscious hunter.

Contact: Jackson Rifles, 01644 470223 www.jacksonrifles.com

£440



Dedicated

If you own a Smith & Wesson, M&P 15-22 then you might like this. The design is the classic, Assault Systems, wedge-shaped rifle case. 38" long and 13" at its deepest point it's ideal for the shorter AR15s; M4/CAR15 etc complete with a scope on top. The main compartment has a full-length, double-ended zipper with pull tags. Inside are securing straps. On the outside are 5 x 30-round mag pouches and a long integral zipper compartment at the front. With wrap-around carry handles and an adjustable shoulder strap and the S&W logo this is a practical AR bag!

Contact: Suffolk Rifle Co, 01473 730035
www.suffolkrifle.co.uk



£45

Hard Case

Ultimate protection for a rifle comes from a hard case, which can be expensive, not so with Flambeau. Made of a high-impact polymer the Single Rifle Case measures 53 x 12.1 x 3.7" and is lined with eggshell foam. Designed for a scoped firearm hence the bowed shape, the two halves are fullered to give rigidity and strength and is connected by three sections of full-length, piano-style hinges. It has twin square bases so it can stand upright and is locked by four clasps. The large handle is integral and there are four holes for padlocks so it can be used for air travel.

Contact: Highland Outdoors,
0845 099 0252 (nearest stockist)

£41.99



Fingertip Control

Hornady's Lock-N-Load Quick Trickle is the ultimate powder trickler. With a height-adjustable base the hopper holds ½ lb in capacity. The dispenser tube is 4 ¾" so doesn't get in the way. At the back are two geared wheels large (top) and small (bottom) each having its own handle. This gives a ratio of 1 to 3 so each full turn of the top rotates the lower one three times, which gives a high dispensing speed. Once near (needle starting to hover) switch to the smaller handle at 3 to 1 ratio to fine tune the charge.

Contact: Edgar Brothers Ltd,
01625 613177
www.hornady.com



£99.00

DRESS IT UP!

ATI has the solution with their AR22 stock kit for your 10/22. It consists of an AR-like polymer/clamshell receiver with dummy forward assist, safety, mag release, bolt hold open and case deflector. Plus T2-style pistol grip, round/free-float alloy forend, dummy alloy T-handle, 21" alloy Picatinny rail and a 6-position CAR15-type butt with adjustable comb on an alloy buffer tube. A final item is the spiked FSA8 Nose Cone, which is designed to stabilise on barricades. It takes about ten minutes to fit and transforms your old Ruger both cosmetically and practically!

Contact: Viking Arms Ltd,
01423 780810
(nearest stockists)



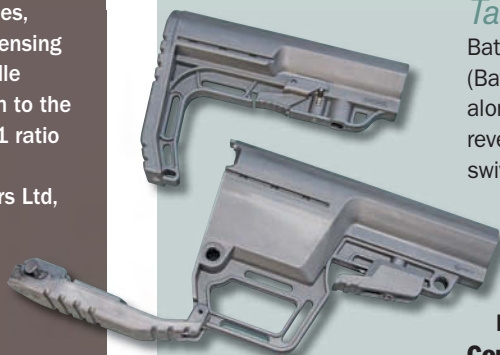
£252

Taking Stock

Battlelink offers a choice of CAR15 butt designs. The BUS (Battlelink Utility Stock) is a heavy build with a cut-out at the base along with a hinged, rubber recoil pad section that opens up to reveal a storage compartment. It shows two socket-type QD sling swivel bases. The BMS (Battlelink Minimalist Stock) is a simpler and lighter L-shaped build. The angled recoil pad is the same but it has sling slots and is lighter and more compact. Available in a number of colours and either Mil-Spec or commercial buffer tubes these are tough and practical designs.

Prices: BUS £115 BMS £50

Contact: North West Custom Parts, 0161 408 1159



Squeeze...

Lee's Ergoprime is their third generation handheld priming tool, with the earlier AutoPrime and AutoPrime XR - having been improved in ergonomics and safety. The operating lever is easier to use along with a secondary lifter to separate the insertion and feed of primers to increase safety. Small pimples are moulded into the square tray to easily accept most primer boxes. It uses Lee's standard, slide-in shell holders and will accept up to 300 Win Mag head size. The Ergoprime is the evolution of the original AutoPrime with no inherent failings.

Contact: Henry Krank & Co Ltd, 0113 256 9163
www.leeprecision.com



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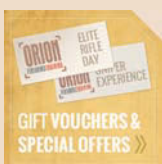
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SS01.15/19/P

With law-abiding shooters getting justifiably upset about recent ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) comments on unannounced checks and asking the non-shooting public to be aware and report of any signs of radicalism or terrorist sympathies amongst shooters, things have become a little fraught. Below a response from the head of ACPO breaking it down a little more sensibly. I feel this should have been done from day one rather than the perceived heavy-handed approach of their first communications.
Pete Moore (Editor)

Dear Certificate Holder

You may be aware of the national activity around firearms licensing which commenced on 13 October 2014. Concerns were raised about this activity by some members of the shooting community and, following consultation with the Countryside Alliance, we wanted to jointly write to you to provide some more information about the activity.

As the national lead for firearms I have worked closely with the firearms community for nearly four years. I understand the importance of shooting as both an essential part of some business practices as well as a much valued leisure pursuit. I want to be very clear that the vast majority of firearms owners in the UK are law abiding and safety conscious. To provide some background to the national initiative on firearms licensing: over the last five years, an average of 659 firearms, shotguns and certificated items have been lost or stolen each year. This number is coming down, but there are many individuals with criminal intent who want to get hold of guns. In this context, every gun lost or stolen is one too many.

The terrorist threat was raised recently from substantial to severe, meaning that an attack is likely. Presently there is little evidence of legal firearms users being involved in terrorism but we need to work together to ensure that this remains the case and to do everything we can to stop legally held firearms getting into the wrong hands and being misused.

To this end, a reminder was issued to gun owners to check the secure storage of their firearms to ensure that they were not inadvertently putting people at risk by making access to a firearm easy. People were informed that this would be followed up through visits to firearm owners to check their gun was being kept securely and provide advice if it was not. A national Crimestoppers hotline was also launched, so that anyone with any concerns about a certificate holder, which may include a gun being kept insecurely or a gun owner possibly showing changes in behaviour that could indicate signs of radicalisation or extremism or involvement in criminal activity, could report their concerns anonymously.

All of these actions have been taken to prevent harm, working with those in the firearms community to explain what we were doing and why. However, I am conscious that what we are doing may have been misunderstood. In a meeting with the Countryside Alliance and the Rt Hon Oliver Letwin on 24 October 2014 concerns were raised on behalf of the shooting community.

The concerns raised have been appreciated and I would like to provide some reassurance to those in the shooting community who may feel that they are being unfairly targeted. This is not our intention. It would be neither productive nor effective. I understand that the dedicated Crimestoppers hotline has caused concerns and anxiety amongst the shooting community, and in particular amongst certificate holders who feel that they could be targeted by those opposed to shooting. As a result of listening to those concerns we have agreed that there will no longer be a specific firearms licensing hotline number. We will continue to work with Crimestoppers, in close consultation with shooting organisations, around further campaigns on firearms licensing. However, these will only use the main Crimestoppers number. These campaigns will aim to reach the shooting community, their friends, family and loved ones, asking them to be vigilant about any potential concerns or risks.

The police and Crimestoppers already receive a high volume of calls on a daily basis about a range of issues. We are experienced at screening out false and malicious reporting, and at identifying cases in which reports made by telephone, text or email may be part of an organised campaign against lawful activities. The call handlers are trained in cognitive interviewing, and engage in conversations rather than simply reading from scripts. They monitor call levels and review them for trends and patterns, closely liaising with the police about the calls and referrals they make. Together, we carefully assess the intelligence received and respond proportionately and sensitively. Our only aim is to identify and deal with genuine risks and dangers to public safety.

The police have a responsibility to keep people safe so we need to be sure that concerns about gun owners are heard and looked into; even if the vast majority come to nothing. I can assure you that all the home visits will be largely intelligence led, carried out professionally and that gun owners will be treated with respect. It is important to recognise that the primary purpose of the police as the licensing authority is where possible, to prevent harm being caused with lawfully held guns and further reduce the already low levels of gun crime and harm that we experience in the UK. This is clearly in the interest of the shooting community and underlines why we will only be effective in achieving this if we work together.

Our shared interest is to safeguard the public not impede the legitimate pursuit of shooting activity.

If you are in any way unsure of the best way to maintain proper security of your guns and ammunition, then you can find current and up to date advice in Chapter 19 of the Home Office Guide on Firearms Licensing Law, which can be found on the internet at <https://www.gov.uk>. Alternatively, telephone 101 and ask to speak to your local police crime prevention or firearms licensing department.

We hope this letter has explained why this action has been taken and reassured those with concerns that it is being done proportionately and in the public interest.

Yours sincerely

Andy Marsh Sir Barney White-Spunner KCB CBE
Chief Constable Executive Chairman
Chair, ACPO FELWG Countryside Alliance

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Pete Moore reacquaints himself with an old friend and the iconic American World War II and Korean battle rifle

Back in action, Suffolk Rifle is now offering straight-pull M1 Garands and they are sweet!

The Rifleman's Rifle

The rear sight is fully adjustable and highly sophisticated for a battle rifle, the crown and letters FKF indicate this component was for a Danish M1.

Stocks are walnut and from Minelli of Italy and are of good quality and fit

Described by General George S Patton as: “the finest battle implement ever devised” and an unknown commentator as – ‘the rifleman’s rifle’, of the two I subscribe to the second when it comes to the M1 Garand. For its day it does stand out as the first ever, general issue military self-loader, even though other designs saw limited use as early as World War 1. It was also the wellspring for its replacement the 7.62 NATO M14.

Don’t get me wrong I love the old Garand and had the pleasure of owning one for many years. However, it’s a quirky design with a rather strange feed system and like most military rifles of its day seriously over engineered. But it’s a shooter! I have won a number of iron sights comps with mine, and it really is a rifleman’s rifle! I defy anyone who shoots a rifle to pick up an M1 up and not appreciate how good it feels and handles.

Suffice to say the Garand was a contender for the US’s first self-loader and won out over other designs to be officially accepted as the U.S. rifle, caliber .30, M1 chambered in 30-06 Springfield. One piece of trivia on its eccentric designer John C Garand; he had a love of ice skating and when the local rink closed down for the summer he installed refrigeration pipes in his front room and flooded it so he could still skate!

RE-BIRTH OF THE M1

In post self-loading rifle UK I have only ever seen two manually-operated/hybrid M1s and I was never truly certain of their parentage. I have also seen few M14/M1As either and in general if you want a .30 calibre straight-pull then it’s either an L1A1 or FN FAL, neither of which is truly practical when compared to the top choice – a 223 Rem AR15.

However, in shooting circles the M1 Garand has a mystique all its own, probably down to films like Saving Private Ryan and the way its en-bloc clip ejects with a distinctive ‘ping’ after the last round has fired. Many times I have heard the comment; wouldn’t it be great if someone could bring in an M1 straight-pull? Well finally it has happened as Neal Parnham (Suffolk Rifle Co) who is big in this area managed to find a company who



Using PPU’s M2 ball load the M1 shot very well indeed



Action detail note the magazine system, clip guides and cocking handle

were prepared to build UK-legal rifles using of all things Italian-made Beretta and Breda components. Let me explain.

After World War II the Garand was adopted by many nations as an off-the-shelf self-loader, with Norway, Denmark and Holland being a few examples. To save logistical hassle the Winchester machinery was shipped to Europe and components made by both Beretta and Breda. In fact Beretta went a stage further and produced the BM59, which was in essence a box mag Garand in 7.62 NATO. The upshot of this was that a number of new manufactured and unused actions and parts were found, which means they could legally be built up into manually operated guns for our market.

THING OF BEAUTY

It seemed very strange to see to what is to all intents and purposes a brand new M1, as my pre 1988/SLR ban rifle was military

surplus. Stocks are walnut and made by Minelli who are big in the UK as they make woodwork for airgun companies the likes of Daystate and Air Arms. Obviously the barrel is new and un-drilled for a gas port and all other components are unused with the exception of the gas tube which did look surplus. The finish is a grey phosphate as the original. It’s estimated that over 6.5 million rifles were produced overall with a World War 2 unit cost of \$85 per gun, which back then was not cheap. In the 1970s Springfield Armoury offered a civilian version doubtless to compliment their M1A (civilian M14).

Though all Garand’s were chambered in 30-06, after the war the US Navy had rifles converted to 7.62 NATO in line with the adoption of this calibre by the US and other member countries. This was achieved by an insert that took up the reduced COL in the full length, 06 chamber, which was then glued and fired into position. The reasoning I assume; yes we need a 7.62 but why does the Navy need to buy new rifles?

↑FOR

Finally a UK legal M1 Garand
Superior shootability
Good accuracy potential

↓AGAINST

Limited magazine capacity
Loading a tad different

→VERDICT

A rifleman’s rifle
Near 100% new build
Good price

Visually the M1 is a most pleasing design with nice lines and natural shootability. It is also a big and heavy gun at around 10.5 lbs loaded and 43.5" with its 24" barrel. However, it does not feel that heavy and balances better than most modern heavy barrelled AR15s.

PING!

The mechanism uses a twin-lug rotating bolt that is actuated by a long, 24" piston/operating rod with a cocking handle on the right of the action. Feed is quite involved with an integral magazine with a sprung lever mechanism leading up to a skeleton platform with shuttling round divider plate. It is fed by an en-bloc, 8-round clip that goes into the magazine and acts as the ammo box until all the cartridges are fed and fired then automatically ejects with the action holding open. It offers the aforementioned and distinctive 'ping' noise when it does, I don't know why but it's a really pleasing sound!

On the left of the receiver is a long, L-shaped catch (clip latch), which allows you to eject the clip and any ammo remaining if you want to unload. The trigger is a 2-stage unit with about 1/4" of readable take up followed by a surprisingly crisp break of 4-5 lbs, again very useable. The safety is 'in-guard' with a lever at the front that is pulled rearwards by the trigger finger for SAFE and pushed forward to FIRE; most practical.

Sights are impressive with a fully adjustable rear aperture with left and right knobs giving, micrometer windage and elevation correction. The front is a blade set in protective wings atop the gas tube ring. An Allan key at the rear allows it to be moved laterally for coarse windage, once sorted the rear dials could be set to zero. In used fine tuning your aim is a doddle and compensating for wind too; like I said well over engineered for a battle rifle. Features like this really endear the M1 and later M14 to shooters.

IMPORTED SECT 1

My tester had a Breda-made receiver marked up with a crown and the initials FKF (Førsvarets Krigsmateriel Førvæltning) making it a Danish M1 component. On the

Front sight detail, as can be seen it's windage-adjustable for basic zeroing



There's little doubt the M1 Garand has something about it, just pick it up and shoot it to see what I mean!



PETE MOORE SAYS:

"Rifles will come with 1 x clip, spares are still reasonably easy to locate in the military surplus and re-enactment market"

point of legality the M1's are made in Europe to UK-legal, 'large firearms' requirements using unissued components and therefore imported as a Section 1.

The last time I shot my M1 was in 1989 the year of the SLR hand-in and I was really looking forward to seeing what this new gun could do. Rifles will come with 1 x clip, spares are still reasonably easy to locate in the military surplus and re-enactment market. I would advise getting hold of a good few, as being 2nd hand and from past experience not all work 100% and they are easily lost too! Also if you want to dress it up like the original a US 1907 leather sling is

what you need. Neal includes the original cleaning kit that fits in the butt trap and is looking into slings.

TESTING

When the M1 first arrived I only had a mish mash of sporting ammo from 150 to 180-grains, which I used for function testing, as we all know a hybrid straight-pull is not worth a damn unless you can extract and eject the cases easily! Being a Garand I decided I needed to feed it what it was designed for and contacted Henry Krank & Co Ltd as they import Prvi Partizan (PPU) ammo who offer a reproduction of the US

Trigger and safety detail, note the clip latch above and the Breda markings on the receiver





Clip in position for loading, note the pimple at the top which means it can be put in either way



Loading METHOD 2 - right hand holds back the bolt and also feeds the clip; mind your thumb though!

service M2 ball cartridge in its original 150-grain FMJ loading. The M2 is rated at 2800 fps with the PPU coming in at an average of 2767 fps so near enough!

Loading the clip is easy as it's really an open-front/top & bottom box magazine, just stack them in, making sure the rims are touching the rear and the eighth locks it all in tight. In military service ammo was only issued pre-loaded in 40-round bandoliers (5 x 8-round clips)!

Loading is a bit of an art and you can do it two ways. METHOD 1- open the action then pull back on the cocking handle to take the weight of the spring and insert the clip. There are pimples on either side that engage with slots in the receiver to align it correctly. Still taking the weight push it down with your left hand until it clicks then let the handle go, which will fly forward to chamber the first round. Here it's best to give the handle a smack with your palm to ensure the bolt is fully locked.

METHOD 2 - The quicker/cooler way is to open the action and locate the clip as before, then support the forend with your left hand. Make your right hand into a blade and with the edge push back on the handle to take the weight, then push the clip in with your thumb and smartly bring your hand away. It's quicker and more efficient but be warned get it wrong and you get 'M1 thumb' as in the bolt picks up

your thumb and tries to load it, need I say more?

If you need to unload a partially loaded rifle which is unlikely as chances are you'll just shoot to the PING for the sheer hell of it proceed as follows. Place the butt on your right thigh, and eject the round in the chamber keeping the action open. Then cup your left hand over the receiver and press the clip latch with your thumb, the clip and remaining live rounds will be pushed up and out to catch. Coolest of all is catching the clip after the last round has fired, if you want to show off, but don't drop it as you'll look like an idiot!

A BIT STIFF

Being brand new the main spring was very strong and I found it all but impossible to load using METHOD 2. My old M1 which was obviously run in was never a problem and in competition the advantages were obvious. I would tentatively suggest taking a coil or two off the spring to ease the pressure slightly.

With that out of the way I ran the gun with the heavier bullet weights and it was OK with a few hard extractions, which was not unexpected for a new rifle. Switching to the PPU M2 and rested/supported at 100m the M1 was printing some seriously good groups for an iron sighter with a maximum spread of 3". I had a few more hard extractions but after 80 + rounds the mech was starting to

run in, a dab of molly grease on the locking lugs and bolt run certainly helped.

I was expecting the cocking handle to be a bit small for easy operation, but it proved adequate. However, I would say that any .30 cal hybrid is a lot more physical to operate than a comparable 223 AR as you are moving more metal around. In terms of practicality the M1 will always be slower as for example on a 20-round course of fire you will need to reload twice.

I don't however see the M1 as a purely Practical Rifle or CSR tool as it has its limitations, it is however a thing of beauty and extreme shootability with good accuracy potential. Were this my gun I'd run it on either Sierra 168-grain Match Kings or Hornady A-MAXs and I reckon it would sing and also bring a big grin to my face!

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

■ Name	M1 Garand
■ Calibre	30-06
■ Action	hybrid straight-pull
■ Barrel	24"
■ Length	43.5"
■ Weight	10.5 lbs
■ Sights	Y
■ Price	£1690
■ Contact	Suffolk Rifle Co, 01473 730035 www.suffolkrifle.co.uk PPU ammunition Henry Krank & Co Ltd, 0113 256 9163

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A188	223 Rem FMJ BT 55gr	£50.30
A399	223 Match BT HP69gr NEW	£65.65
A495	223 Match 75gr	£65.65
A253	22-250 Rem SP 50gr	£62.85
A211	22-250 Rem SP 55gr	£62.85
A212	22-250 Rem FMJ BT 55gr	£62.85
A270	243 Win SP 90gr	£62.85
A134	243 Win SP 100gr	£65.57
A047	25-06 Rem PSP 100gr	£68.85
A208	6,5 x 52 Car FMJ BT 139gr	£68.85
A084	6,5 x 55 SP BT 139gr	£62.85
A083	6,5 x 55 FMJ BT 139gr	£62.85
A227	6,5 x 55 SP RN 156gr	£62.85
A161	270 Win SP 130gr	£62.85
A027	270 Win SP 150gr	£62.85
A141	7 X 57 FMJ BT 173gr	£62.85
A400	7mm - 08 PSP 140gr	£68.40
A024	30 Carbine FMJ RN 110gr	£52.35
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A034	308 FMJ BT 145gr	£63.70
A020	308 SP 150gr	£62.20
A362	308 PSP BT 165gr	£62.80
A363	308 HP BT Match 168gr	£75.00
A366	308 FMJ BT 175gr	£62.80
A035	308 SP 180gr	£62.80
A028	30-30 FSP 150gr	£62.80
A346	7,5x54 French FMJ 139gr	£68.40
A345	7,5x55 Swiss FMJ BT 174gr	£68.40
A094	30-06 FMJ 150gr	£68.40
A365	30-06 HP BT 168gr	£68.40
A066	30-06 SP 180gr	£68.40
A041	7,62 X 39 FMJ 123gr	£58.70
A169	7,62 X 54 FMJ BT 182gr	£68.40
A143	303 British FMJ BT 174gr	£77.00
A267	375 H&H Mag 300gr	£171.50
A265	375 H&H FMJ RN 300gr NEW	£171.50
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A348	8x57 JS FMJ BT Match 198gr	£82.75
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A166	9mm Luger 147gr FMJ	£28.50
A140	38 SPL RNFP 158gr	£28.50
A446	357 Sig 125gr FMJ	£42.80
A339	357 Magnum FPJ 158gr	£42.80
A353	40 S&W 180gr TMJ	£42.80
A222	44 Magnum 180gr FPJ	£53.55
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C062	30-06 NEW	£43.60
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C345	7,5 x 55 Swiss	£43.60
C030	7,62 x 39	£35.00
C020	308 Winchester	£37.00
C346	7,5 x 54 French	£43.60
C031	7,62 x 54R	£40.20
C128	8mm Mauser	£40.20
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B105	7mm 158gr Grom	£27.90
B010	30 FMJ RN 110gr	£18.15
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B007	30 FMJ 139gr	£18.15
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Abbreviations Explained

SP - Soft Point
PSP - Pointed Soft Point
SPBT - Soft Point Boat Tail
PSPBT - Pointed Soft Point Boat Tail
SPRN - Soft Point Round Nose
FSP - Flat Soft Point
HPBT - Hollow Point Boat Tail
FPJ - Flat Point Jacket
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FMJRN - Full Metal Jacket Round Nose
FMJBT - Full Metal Jacket Boat Tail
RNFP - Round Nose Flat Point

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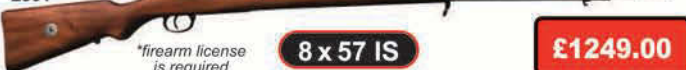
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Standard glass

Pete Moore
looks at a more
conventional
specification
scope from the
boys from the Tyrol
but with a twist

Though Swarovski's Z6 series is impressive with its 6 x zoom range not every shooter wants or needs it so the Z4 addresses a more general need



Though a household word amongst shooters and hunters for many years, top quality binoculars and spotting scopes aside Swarovski's biggest contribution to optical development must be their Z6/Z6i series of rifle scopes. With what is known as a 6 x zoom range it allows for a wider magnification spread and in doing so offers an optic that can do more than one job successfully. For example their 1.7-10x42 offers a reasonably traditional higher end up to x10, but also can be set as low as just x1.7 meaning you could use it with equal success on short range driven hunts as well as winding it right up for mid/longer range shooting.

DO YOU REALLY NEED IT?

I have two Z6s the aforementioned 1.7-10x42 and the larger 2.5-15x56 with ballistic turret, of the two the former gets more use across its magnification range than the latter. It occurred to me that here in the UK we hunters tend to march to the beat of a different drum

when compared to our European counterparts. Probably why a specification of around 3-9 x40 to 3-12 x 50 is most popular with very little need for a lower magnification as we don't do driven!

These two specifications are based around the more normal 4 x zoom range, which has done well for many years and will continue to do so for many more to come. Swarovski doubtless with that in mind offer their Z4i range in three options: 1.25-4x24, 2.5-10x56 and 3-12x50 (on test). Of these my choice would be the 2.5-10x56 as I prize a 56mm objective more than a slightly higher



Unlike most modern scopes the Z4i offers the option of illumination or not in the package

top end magnification, to me it's an ideal spec for general deer shooting! What is very different however is the method of illumination, which takes the form of a screw-on module, not dissimilar to what Kahles offered a good few years ago. I will come back to this later.

TECH SPEC

The build is familiar with a one-piece, round, 30mm body tube, it's of average dimensions at 13.5" long and weighing 18.3oz. They also offer their Swarovski Rail (SR) fitment, which is far more popular in Europe, though very strong. There's a fast-focus eyepiece and a ridged rubber magnification ring with an integral raised blade for fast operation. Turrets are reasonably standard being low hunter-types under screw-off caps – 'set & forget' as I term them! Click values are 1cm

The Z4 offers a standard x4 zoom range, which is more than enough for most uses



↑ FOR

Usual top quality product

↓ AGAINST

Illumination model makes elevation turret a bit high

→ VERDICT

Good general use scope
Superb optics and performance
Removable illumination
bit of a Marmite feature

Swarovski
Z4i 3-12x50
just a tad
different
in terms of
illumination



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

■ Name	Swarovski Z4i 3-12x50
■ Exit pupil diameter (mm)	13.1-4.2
■ Eye relief	90
■ Field of view (ft/100 yds/m/100m)	33-10.5 / 11-3.5
■ Field of view (degrees)	6.3-2
■ Dioptic compensation (dpt)	-3 to +2
■ Light transmission	93%
■ Twilight factor	9-25
■ Click values	1cm @ 100m/.36" @ 100 yards
■ Rotations	3.5
■ Length	13.54"
■ Weight	18.3oz
■ Price	£1,630
■ Contact	Swarovski UK Limited, +44 (0) 1737 856812, www.swarovskioptik.com

@ 100m/.36" @ 100 yards, with 34-clicks per rotation and 3.5 rotations top to bottom and side to side. This gives a ball park movement of 42" @ 100 yards, which is what you might expect from a European hunting optic. Turret rims can be lifted and disengaged to set a ZERO position.

The windage cap has a screw-off top compartment that holds a spare battery for the rheostat. Where the Z4i really differs is in its method of illumination! As opposed to a left side of saddle position that most makes go for, or the integral fitment with pressure pads in the eye bell section of the Z6i it uses a module that screws on to the elevation turret.

When you remove the turret cap you will see inside a metal connection disc. The

rheostat screws onto this and makes a contact so providing both power and adjustment. Operation is simple - pull up the rubber-covered sides of the drum to turn it on then rotate it clockwise (+) to increase the brightness or anti-clockwise (-) to decrease it. Pushing it down switches off!

DIFFERENT APPROACH

It is a rather different approach in some ways and as I said similar in principle to a Kahles 1.5-6x24 scope a friend of mine has. His was 20-years old and the illumination was not by an electric contact but by a light in the turret shining down. I suppose the advantage is that you do not have to have the module fitted unless you want to. Conversely if you want it and it's not on you

have to fit it! On reflection I feel that an integral system is preferable.

Swarovski offer a choice of two reticules, both in this second focal plane system. First the more basic 4A-1 which is a generic #4 style, three thick outer bars at 3, 6 and 9 o'clock with a thin inner cross coming down from 12 o'clock. Only the centre is illuminated. I have always found this a useful, across the board pattern! A little more detailed is the 4A-300-1, which is a more open version of the latter with a wider centre cross and three range bars below on the 6 o'clock inner vertical. These can be set up in conjunction with their ballistic resource (on line) that provides zero/drop points for both factory ammo and reloads.

AS EXPECTED

In use the quality I expect from any Swarovski optic was there; superb clarity, colour definition and low light capability. No complaints at all! The illumination control is flexible and also seamless and easy to use; however I do not like its 12 o'clock positioning. But in retrospect it makes manufacture easier as you do not have to have two different models - lit or unlit, so no extra machining process or material used.



Detail of illumination contact in the turret



Note the size and height of the illumination turret

Very non-traditional – the Ruger 96 lever-action rifle this one is in 22 Magnum so designated the 96/22M



Ruger's LEVER-ACTION

Pete Moore finds an unexpected and unusual bargain in Ruger's only lever-action rifle

I have a stock of common calibre rifles for ammo testing and other uses, but up until a month ago I did not have a 22 Magnum (Winchester Magnum Rimfire) and had been thinking about adding one. Quite by chance I met an old game keeper who was retiring and getting rid of his rifles, one of which was a Ruger 96/22 M (22 Magnum).

LEVER-ACTION LOVE AFFAIR

There's little doubt that the Americans are in love with lever-action rifles with Winchester and Marlin being the two major players. They are popular in pistol calibres like 38/357 Magnum, 45 Colt or 44 Magnum and good, close range, brush hunting tools for deer and feral pig. Ruger decided to get into this lucrative market with a lever-gun of their own.



The 22 WMR is a potent rimfire here we see it in Hornady's 30-grain V-MAX loading, note the 9-shot rotary box mag common to Ruger 17HMR and 22WMR bolt guns

However, typical of them, they decided to do it their way and came up with the Model 96. Looking like a 10/22 major differences were the more curved rear of the receiver, internal hammer and the obvious lever system. Offered in 44 Magnum and three rimfire chamberings – 22 LR, 22 WMR and 17 HMR they used the same rotary magazines as the bolt-action and semi-auto Ruger's in these calibres. The only exception was the 4-shot clip of the 96/44, which was not the same as their bolt-action 77/44.

Anyone familiar with a 10/22 would have no problems operating the 96 as the cross bolt safety is at the front of the trigger guard with a similar though longer, push-up mag release at the rear of the well. Iron sights are identical with a fold-down rear U-notch and a windage-only blade up front. My example was not threaded, which would require the front sight to be removed and the boss turned down. Two slight differences are a cocked action indicator pin at the rear of the curved receiver and the usual, small ½" scope rail that does not use the same screw spacing as the 10/22 (annoying). The 44 was better as it had an all-steel receiver, logical really, complete with an integral rib that accepts Ruger's dedicated scope bases.

SHORT BEECH

The beech stock shows a very short length of pull (LOP) and the familiar shiny plastic



Lever and safety catch detail, the action is slick and easy to use

butt plate. I paid the princely sum of £125 for my example and it was in reasonable condition and came fitted with an old Pecar scope. The previous owner had bodged a butt extension with green tape and an old leather, slip-on pad. As luck would have it I had a proper, Mini 14 rubber butt extension, which solves the LOP and slippery feel problems.

The 22 Magnum version feeds from the same, 9-shot magazine as Ruger's 77/17



and 77/22M bolt-actions. The locking uses a pull-down bolt not dissimilar to the old Savage 99C centrefire lever-action. The bolt locks at the rear with a steel insert into the aluminium receiver. The operation is smooth and reliable, but the trigger is heavy! I'd say a minimum of 6 lbs and a graunchy pull and break at that. There's not a lot you can do apart from take it to a gunsmith as none of the 10/22 or 77/22 drop-in trigger kits will fit, nor will any of the extended mag catches. Another strange anomaly is the fact the mag catch will not work unless the lever-action is slightly opened.

LONG GONE

Overall the 96/22M is a handy rifle with its 18.5" barrel and 37.25" length at an easy 5.25 lbs. In terms of lever-actions it was quite a step forward with its detachable magazine over the more traditional Winchester 94 and Marlin 1894 tube-mag designs. It was produced from 1996 to 2009 and was not overly successful.



Due to the curved receiver the 1/2" scope base is very short and offers little eye relief adjustment

I think where Ruger fell down was in not offering it in other centrefire calibres like 357 Magnum or 45 Colt. Equally the low, 4-round magazine capacity of the 44 Magnum version did not help, I assume they only saw it as a hunting carbine. Their thinking probably based on their successful Deerfield autoloading carbine in 44 Magnum. In 357 with say a 10-shot clip the 96 could have been quite the thing

and would have gone down well in the UK post the handgun ban. In 22 Long Rifle it could also accept the 25-round banana mags like the Butler Creek or later Ruger BX25.

Overall a better mousetrap that was way ahead of its time in some ways, but one that was not properly thought through, with ease of production outweighing proper product research.



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SPLIT PERSONALITY

Pete Moore looks at a new version of an old design that has morphed from a versatile field gun into a modern youth rifle

I suppose these days we tend to associate combination (shotgun/rifle) guns with the European market and not with the USA! However there's a notable exception the Savage Model 24, which was an outgrowth of the original Stevens 22-410, which took the form of a traditional looking break-barrel, over & under (O/U) shotgun layout with the top tube in 22 LR and the lower in .410. This was back in 1938 and as well as its sporting use the US Army Air Force ordered 1500 with synthetic (Tenite) stocks as aircrew survival rifles.

By 1950 Stevens had discontinued the 22-410, but it was picked up by Savage Arms and revamped and packaged as the Model 24 in a surprising number of calibres - .410, 20 and 12-gauge shotgun and 22 LR, 22WMR, 30-30 Win, 357 magnum, 22 Hornet, 222 and 223 Rem and 357 Maximum rifled. The rifle featured 24"

barrels and both wood and synthetic stock options along with an external, selectable firing pin hammer and top lever opening system. There was even a deluxe version with a case-hardened action, good walnut furniture and a scope rail along with the standard iron sights. Plus a camo/synthetic turkey gun (Model 24 F) with three interchangeable choke tubes, a survival gun with an integral compass and on-gun storage along the light and compact 20" Camper's Companion. As can be seen Savage made the most of the Model 24 and production lasted for 60-years - 1950 to 2010.

YOUTH MARKET

From a utilitarian view point a combination gun in the right calibres can be a useful, do-it-all game getter. I think I'd go with a 20-gauge/223 Rem if I was shopping in

that area, as I could also include rifled slug to give me a bigger game capacity. I have seen Model 24s before and have to say they are quite nice, but surprising was the information from importers Edgar Brothers Ltd, that Savage have once again re-thought the combo gun concept with their new Model 42.

The gun that turned up was a far cry from the wood and blued Model 24 and if anything was surprisingly small making me think it was aimed at the youth market in the USA. This is an area where many US manufacturers concentrate on as if you catch them at the right age they will be shooters forever. The Americans even have a group that administers this. Called The Youth Shooting Sports Alliance (YSSA) it introduces young people to the pleasures and responsibilities of shooting. They say: "it is our most important task in ensuring



"I think I'd go with a 20-gauge/223 Rem if I was shopping in that area"

that our shooting and hunting traditions remain intact." You'll get no arguments from me on that one! The YSSA site provides a directory for youth shooting sports programs across the country. <http://www.youthshootingusa.com/>

SLIM JIM

When compared to the impressive choice of calibres and model options of the old M24 the new M42 is far more Spartan in both looks, materials and options. You have two options either 22 LR or 22 WMR rifled barrels but in both cases a .410 tube underneath. Obviously the LR chambering will also accept Short and Long cartridges too. The furniture is a moulded polymer with the choice of black or black! As a flourish Savage have gone mad with the red line detail! Truth is for what is highly traditional design it looks rather good if a trifle hi-tech. It is however tiny, as perhaps befits a youth model, with short 20" barrels and the slimmest stock I have ever seen. However, I'm a hulking 6ft 2" yet it fits surprisingly well and does not feel cramped.

The butt shows a 13.5 length of pull (LOP) with a thick rubber recoil pad. The pistol grip is long and raked with cast-in

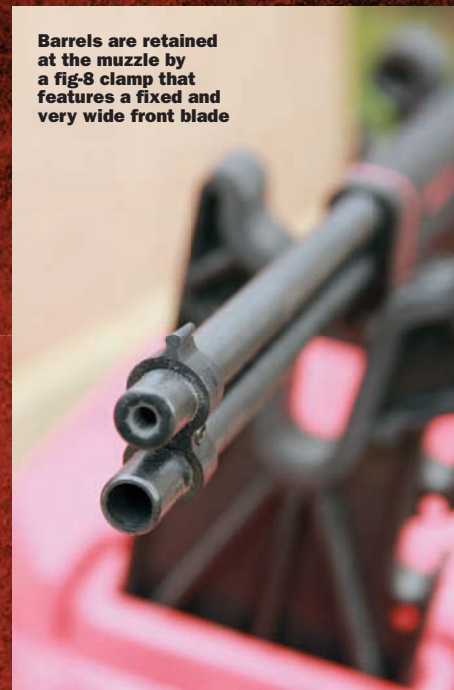
grooves with texturing inbetween. As befits a US shotgun the comb is very low and places the head nicely for the iron sights – more of them later. The forend is flat like a board and features an angled underside with deep finger grooves. QD sling studs are fitted fore and aft.

Most unusual is the fact the barrels appear to be cast into the forend and the monobloc is high strength aluminium alloy. As you might expect the action is extract-only with the empties being pulled clear by your fingers. The extractor is also manual and consists of a long, polymer, U-shaped plate that fits around the sides of the monoblock, the sides are slotted to allow you to pull it back about 1/4" to start the process. In its centre is a sprung steel V-plate configured in size for the cartridge rims.

WHAT NO GLASS?

The barrels are retained and stabilised at the muzzle by an angled Fig-8 clamp that also mounts a thick, fixed blade foresight. The .410 tube is Improved Cylinder bored judging by the patterns it throws, also to allow the use of slug ammo, which in terms of energy will equate to around a

Barrels are retained at the muzzle by a fig-8 clamp that features a fixed and very wide front blade



38 +P or 357 Magnum pistol cartridge. Atop the monoblock is the rear sight, this offers a small U-notch and limited elevation and windage adjustment. Primitive but good enough to zero up to 50-yards. However, Savage have made bit of a mistake as the notch is too near the eye and is not crisp or defined; an aperture would have been better. One thing very much missing is any way to mount an optic, given the moulded forend; surely an integral Weaver base would have not been a problem?

Controls consist of an external, manually cocked, rebounding hammer with ►

Detail of the O/U 22 LR/.410 barrel arrangement, Savage also offers the option of the more powerful 22WMR



Unusually the barrels are moulded into the forend, pity they did not think to include a Weaver base...





The rear sight is primitive but adjustable, however the U-notch would be better positioned further down the barrel for more clarity

► a hinged firing pin that allows you to select top or bottom barrel by simply moving it up or down. The safety is most practical and consists of a large, cross-bolt plunger located under the hammer on the wrist. It pushed right to left to FIRE (red ring showing) and reverses for SAFE. The safety simply blocks the hammer movement and SAFE or FIRE the trigger operates and it falls. The opening lever is located in front of the trigger guard and pulls back to unlock the action, which will fall open.

UTILITARIAN

Though a basic design the Model 42 was growing on me and I could see that it would make a cute little youth gun given it offers both rifle and shotgun abilities. Also a good little design for the close range hunter or even pest controller for certain uses! Edgars supplied some Fiocchi HV 22 LR ammo along with some rather meaty Nobel Sportitalia 19-gram, #5, 3" .410 shells.

Starting off at 50-yards the 22 tube was shooting about 1-2", pretty good given the heavy trigger and mediocre sighting system! So a definite rabbit getter given you are happy with body shots, as can be seen a low power scope

↑ FOR

Light and handy
Good basic field tool or starter gun

↓ AGAINST

Basic sights = limited range
No scope base

→ VERDICT

Tough and practical
Limited calibre choice
Bit pricey for what it is

Keep it simple with a pocketful of 22 LR and .410 the Model 42 has some potential



or even red dot would improve things no end. Much past 50 the limitations of the irons become painfully apparent, I was able to hit a Birchwood Casey, Ground Strike jacks target out to 75-yards but not consistently.

BONE BREAKERS

In .410 mode I tested at 20-yards and the 42 threw a dense and surprisingly consistent pattern. That 3" #5 load would be a real bone breaker too! I found you tend to use the irons without thinking and if you do the gun shoots low, so you need to be aware of this and probably aim about 2" higher to compensate. One thing that you must be aware of is what barrel you have selected. In 22 the large/rounded

firing pin is clearly seen. In shotgun mode it's tipped down and the small, grooved selector is in evidence.

The .410 ammo was pretty hot as a couple of times the primer was pierced and extraction proved stiff in this case, recoil though easy was certainly noticeable. Like any manually-operated gun you soon get used to the way to do things. Shoot, open the action and pump back on the ejector plate then pick the case from the chambers.

Given the limited range due to the basic iron sights the 22WMR version's power and range potential might be a bit wasted. Though just supposition it occurred that a UK version would be good. Thread the rifle barrel for a moddy, add on a Weaver base then fit an extended 24" shotgun tube to suit. Yes I know the Yanks would never do it, but it would make the Model 42 far more marketable, as would more calibre choice as with the older Model 24.

However, for what it is I rather like this quirky yet practical little combination!

Left side showing safety catch, hammer set to 22/upper position and manual extractor, the opening lever is forward of the trigger guard



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

■ Name:	Savage Model 42
■ Type:	break-barrel, combination shotgun/rifle
■ Calibres:	22 LR/ .410 or 22WMR/ .410 (3" chamber)
■ Barrels:	20" (shotgun Improved Cylinder)
■ Stock:	black polymer
■ Sight:	Y
■ Length:	35.75"
■ Weight:	4lbs 11oz
■ Price:	£673
■ Contact:	Edgar Brothers Ltd, 01625 613177 (nearest stockist) www.savagearms.com

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Sporting Life

Pete Moore checks out the latest sport-orientated fullbore and rimfire suppressors from the land of chocolate and cuckoo clocks

B&T (Brugger & Thomet) is a Swiss company specialising in firearms, accessories and solutions to specific customer problems/requirements. One of these areas is sound suppressors and for 23-years they have been supplying moderators to most of Europe's small arms producers, police agencies and NATO militaries. Importers Viking Arms Ltd supplied me some examples of their work in the past and they proved effective at what they did, but the all-steel versions I used were very heavy and we sporting consumers have very specific needs in this area. Put simply if it weighs much more than 1lb people tend to lose interest.

ENTER THE TIGER

With this in mind B&T doubtless realised that A - there's a big potential market out there and B - they needed to produce something that conformed to sporting shooters needs. Called the Tiger it is a muzzle-mounted design available in three fullbore (Light Hunting) and one rimfire (.22 Suppressor) options. Precision made from top quality materials B&T do not give 'lives' for these items but reckon they should last as long as the rifle that uses them.

I have to say that B&T were not that forthcoming with build or material specifications and as the Tigers do not appear to be strippable I shall report on what I can see. We are told they are made of anodised aluminium and inside they look to be baffle less or have very few, along with what look like transfer ports into an outer chamber, which would account for the low weight. Typically they are rated in calibre groups as follows:

↑ FOR
Good build,
effective
moderation

↓ AGAINST
No reflex option

→ VERDICT
Quality product
Should last
a long time



Thread conversion is simple as specific, screw-in bushes are available for most forms, the 22 can however is a fixed ½ x 20 UNF only!

"If it weighs much more than 1lb people tend to lose interest"

With the exception of the Rimfire, which has a fixed ½ x 20 UNF thread in common with near all 22 rifles, the centrefires all use a removable, threaded bush allowing conversion from barrel to barrel by replacing it. The SD-988166 (5.5 – 6.5mm) also offers a ½ x 28 UNEF pitch as well as metric, it seems to be the case of they will make what is required!

For test I was sent the SD-988167, 7 – 8.2mm, which came with a

15mm thread, not having anything cut for that one Viking supplied a ½ x 20 UNF adaptor nut which is simple to replace. Which I shot on both 243 Win and 6.5 Creedmoor barrels and it proved highly effective giving a flat report and was perfectly acceptable on the ear. At under 12oz it proved reasonably handy though was maybe a tad long compared to some other makes. Prices look a bit above average in some case but B&T have never been that cheap. Pro rata it's the Rimfire that comes up most expensive compared to the opposition. The one that appeals most to me is the 5.6-6.5mm SD-988166.



New from B&T the Light Hunting, muzzle-mounted can, this one is in 7 – 8.2mm range and weighs a pleasing 11.9oz

{ TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS }

Model#	Length	Diameter	Weight	Calibre group	Noise Reduction
SD-988166	157mm	40mm	276g/9.7oz	5.5 to 6.5mm	25.5db
SD-988167	198mm	40mm	338g/11.9oz	7 to 8.2mm	25.6db
SD-988168	221mm	40mm	377g/11.8oz	8.5 to 9.4mm	26.4db
SD-998001	152mm	30mm	101g/3.5oz	Rimfire	27-29db

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Wood you?

Pete Moore considers Sauer timber-stocked 101 in the cold light of day

Picture: Max Hunt

Sauer 202; similarities and differences to the 101 can be easily spotted with good and bad features on each side



It was 2013 when Sauer announced its latest product the 101 bolt-action rifle and I tested the synthetic stocked version the 101 Classic XT. About a year later I have the wood stocked option – the Classic in standard, grade 1 walnut. Though a good design the 101 is more an entry level product so fancy timber engraving etc. are not options, but the use of alternative materials and even build methods to keep quality and ability up but costs down certainly are. The thinking behind this policy is perhaps to make you get on board with this prestigious European brand as their 202 is a legendary and popular design.

WOULD I, WOULDN'T I?

Here in the UK the name and price will certainly drag you in, as the 101 is a shooter and cost effective one too for its pedigree. However, if I was buying one then I do not think I would bother moving up to the more expensive 202 as some of the features offered on the 101 are better – higher capacity double-stack magazine and larger ejection port. Plus I have never been a fan of the former design, though know it to be a quality rifle, it just does not float my boat!

With both wood and synthetic stock choices the 101 is available in the following calibres and options – Standard (22") barrel - 22-250 Rem, 243/308/270 Win, 6.5x55 SE, 7x64, 30-06 Springfield,

8x57 IS and 9.3x62. Magnum – (24.5") barrel - 7 mm Rem Mag, 300 and 338 Win Mag, capacity differs being 5 and 4 accordingly. At 42 and 44" long and 6.725 lbs or 6.94 lbs accordingly the 101 is a good looking and feeling rifle. However, I would say that the 22" Standard tube is a bit short for some of the meatier cartridges like 270 Win, 30-06 etc.!

SCALES OF ECONOMY

Closer inspection shows where Sauer have re-thought the basic design to doubtless make it easier and cheaper to produce. The polymer magazine is more cost-effective and the plastic bolt handle probably saves steel and machining. Though not instantly obvious the biggest departure from what is a proven recipe is how the barrel is retained. Traditionally the barrel's chase (parallel chamber section) is threaded as is the receiver and these two components are screwed together.

Sauer use what they call 'a tension-free HEAT LOCK process'. This involves the chase being an interference fit (marginally larger than the receiver socket) here the front of the action is heated and the barrel forced in. When the metal cools and shrinks it grips the tube solidly, an anti rotation pin is then fitted to maintain the position. Being picky you could argue that once the barrel is shot out it cannot be replaced. True but given the quality of Sauer barrels in general which is very high, chances are you will never shoot it out with normal use. Bearing in mind it's a hunting rifle.



Bolt lift is an easy 60° so no problem with scope mounting, note the DURA SAFE safety and SAFE OPENER bolt opening catch

To save using a traditional, fixed recoil lug something called EVER REST bedding replaces this approach. Here a large square alloy recoil block is bedded into the front of the stock's action void. Pins in the underside of the receiver mate with holes in the block with the forward screw passing up through it. As before it's then bolted front and rear.

LOOKS FAMILIAR

There's little denying that the 101 follows the 202 in basic action shape, though the ejection port is larger, equally the bolt looks similar. It's here however things change, the aforementioned polymer knob is obvious, new is the (SAFE OPENER) which allows the action to be opened when cocked and on SAFE. The DURA SAFE safety at first glance could be mistaken for a Blaser-type de-cocker as it's positioned on the angled rear of the shroud. It is however a traditional ON/OFF system. It pushes up to FIRE and reverse for SAFE, in this position the inset button on the catch must be pressed to free it. The bolt uses 6-lugs with a swept back handle giving a 60° lift angle. The head shows twin, plunger-type ejectors, so getting the empty out is not an issue! Typical Sauer it runs smooth and slick to offer a positive action stroke.

The barrel is button rifled and we are told by Sauer that it's a match grade tube, my tester was a 22" Standard in 308 Win. It shows what I would term a light/medium profile and comes threaded 14x1mm (no spigot) from Garlands. Whether wood or polymer the ambidextrous stock is identical with its higher/straighter comb when compared to a 202, length of pull is a generous 14.5" and at the rear is a decent rubber recoil pad! The mag release is located at the front of the well and the clip falls free easily. From factory the trigger is set at a surprisingly light 2 lbs, I appreciated ►



Detail of Sauer's alternative approach to fitting a barrel the HEAT LOCK process, essentially it's a shrink to fit system

Note the Sauer 202-style action, but the ejection port is larger and the magazine system better (pic Max hunt)



► this but if you are not used to something that light get to know it first!

Sensibly the 101 will accept Remington 700 bases – smart move there I reckon? Having recently picked up Minox Optics as a brand Garlands fitted their ZA 5 HD 2-10x50 scope with 30mm tube, which is very much an ideal hunting spec! The wood stock only offers grade 1 timber with chequering on grip and forend, which is OK but nothing special, then again it is what it is and does the job. My tester had obviously done the rounds as the wood was very care worn being chipped, dented and scratched. Another reason to pick the Classic XT (synthetic) furniture - plus its £200 cheaper too. If you appreciate good wood then the Classic is not for you!

SHOOTER? YOU BET

No real complaints on shootability, one niggle though as I do not like the safety! It's a tad high and causes you to break your firing hand

The all-polymer magazine offers a 5-round payload in Standard calibres (4 in Magnum) and feeds smoothly and reliably



position a bit to operate it, plus the extra button push to release it up to FIRE is not conducive with instinctive operation. I do like the ability to have it cocked/SAFE and a press of the SAFE OPENER allows a no worries unload. At the end of the day it's useable and in most cases not an issue.

The mag is nice with a generous 5-shots in Standard calibres and offers reliable feed and fast changes. The trigger was great and really suited me; equally the action is smooth and slick with no feed or ejection issues. Like the Classic XT I tested last year the 101 Classic shot acceptably with a cross section of weights and types. The standard 150-grainers were printing 1" + but moving up to 168-grains and above seemed to suit it better. Dropping to an inch and better, so again more than acceptable.

Having now tested both wood and synthetic versions of the Sauer 101, for me there's only one choice and that's the Classic XT! I will always favour synthetics over timber due to their inherent practicality and toughness. I also feel that with the larger Standard calibres 270 Win and 30-06 etc. a 22" barrel is not getting the best out of them!

The real bonus is the price differential between the XT synthetic and Classic wood, which is considerable as I have illustrated. The £200 saved would go a long way to funding a good quality optic. I suppose the real question is simple; is the Sauer 101

worth it? I say this as it's not a prestige product like the 202, which it is not meant to be, so might put some people off wanting this famous name. Plus with the growing amount of more budget-priced designs the 101 is still expensive. I suppose it's a bit like the Zeiss Duralyt scope – an excellent and more budget-orientated design that wears a famous badge but is it the real McCoy?

I think that is the strength and weakness of the 101 as it's too much like the 202 so many potential buyers, rightly or wrongly will see it as a cheaper copy. Mauser's M12 is very similar to the 101, hardly surprising really as it's essentially the same build and mechanics with just a few subtle design differences. However, the M12 compared to its bigger and more prestigious brother the M03 are as chalk and cheese in what they offer, so the former is perhaps perceived as a more unique design.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

■ Name:	Sauer 101 Classic (wood stock)
■ Calibre:	308 Win (on test)
■ Capacity:	5 (DM)
■ Barrel:	22"
■ Length:	42"
■ Weight:	6.75 lbs
■ Threaded:	14x1mm
■ Price:	£1595
■ Contact:	Garlands Ltd, 01827 383300 www.sauer.de www.minox.com

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- 01 // Forged steel receiver
- 02 // Matchgrade barrel
- 03 // Matte black surface finish
- 04 // 6-lug bolt locks directly into the barrel
- 05 // 60° bolt lift
- 06 // DURA SAFE firing pin safety
- 07 // EVER REST action bedding
- 08 // Two pound trigger
- 09 // Length of pull 14,5 inch
- 10 // Ambidextrous stock with symmetrical palm swells
- 11 // Double stack magazine
- 12 // 5+1 shot Standard/4+1 shot Magnum
- 13 // Screw-cut for moderators 14x1
- 14 // Adjustable open sights optional

CALIBRES, WEIGHTS AND DIMENSIONS

- 01 // Standard calibres: .22-250 Rem., .243 Win., .270 Win., .308 Win., .30-06, 6,5x55, 7x64, 8x57IS, 9,3x62
- 02 // Magnum calibres: 7 mm Rem. Mag., .300 Win. Mag., .338 Win. Mag.
- 03 // Barrel length Standard calibres: 22,05 inch
- 04 // Barrel length Magnum calibres: 24,5 inch
- 05 // Overall length Standard calibres: 42 inch
- 06 // Overall length Magnum calibres: 44,3 inch
- 07 // Weight Standard calibres: 107,6 oz
- 08 // Weight Magnum calibres: 111,1 oz

SAUER 



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Recycling for Profit

Pete Moore takes a look at some new/old cartridge brass that lives to shoot another day and beyond...

As reloaders we know that the humble cartridge case is infinitely reloadable, or not as the case may be! I slavishly collect as much of my fired brass as I can to be recycled and spend a lot of time and effort cleaning, prepping and getting it ready. However, to more high volume users like the armed forces what comes out of their guns is seen as nothing but scrap. But one man's junk is another's profit and that's where Top Brass Inc. comes in as they make a living out of buying ex-military fired cases and refurbishing them for the civilian market.

223 REM AND 308 WIN

Edgar Brothers Ltd are now importing Top Brass products and sent me 223 Rem and 308 Win, well that's what it says on the packet, but they are all from military ammunition so the actual case spec is 5.56 x 45mm and 7.62 x 51mm. All however bear the circle/cross stamp showing that it's NATO approved. My examples came blister-packed in 50-case, plastic trays so useful for reloading.

Top Brass describes their product as follows: 'Mixed headstamps sourced from once-fired military brass. Produced from primarily mixed-year LC (Lake City Arsenal) with smaller amounts of various other NATO-spec brass. Cracking open the 5.56mm showed that it was all LC with dates primarily from 2008 and 2009.

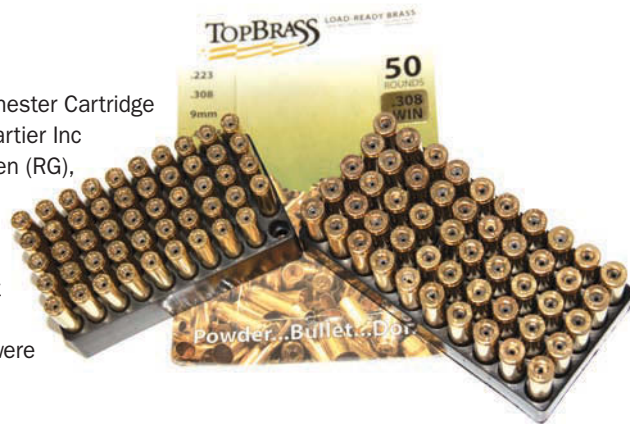
The 308 was a bit more multi-national with LC, Winchester

Repeating Arms, Winchester Cartridge Co, IVI Industries Valcartier Inc (Canada), Radway Green (RG), TAA 205th Arsenal, Material Production Center, Kaohsiung, Taiwan and SBS (Saint Barbara Systems) Toledo, Spain. Dates were from 1968 to 2009!

SORTED

All the brass is boxer-primed and reamed (crimp removed), cleaned, full-length sized, and trimmed to 1.75" (+/- .003") for the 223 Rem and 2.003" (+/- .005") for the 308 Win. My vernier caliper confirmed this with an average case overall length deviation of .003" usually on the plus side. Ammo manufactured with the cases chambered and cycled easily in 223 Rem and 308 Win rifles. However, you must bear in mind that this is military brass and doubtless used in selective fire assault rifles and medium machine guns.

Generally speaking the build is marginally heavier as the loads used will be running at top end to ensure reliability in automatic mechanisms.



Top Brass recycles once-fired, ex-military 5.56 and 7.62 NATO cases

Some of the 7.62 rims showed nicks and dents where they had hit the ejector. Also interior volume will probably differ when compared to a civilian case, so for example a load of 24-grains of Varget will fill a Lake City 5.56 case more, with a subsequent variation in load density/pressures etc.

The Top Brass RRP is £336 per 1000 (223 Rem) and £493 per 1000 (308 Win), which converts into £16.80 and £24.65 for 223 and 308 per 50 pack accordingly. Generally speaking this equates to about 2/3rds the price of commercial brands like Hornady, Winchester or Lapua

"So the actual case spec is 5.56 x 45mm and 7.62 x 51mm"

Cases conformed to quoted dimensions and reload and cycle easily



The 5.56 used LC headstamps, the 7.62 was more mixed race

FOR

A cost effective product for the hand loader

AGAINST

This is once fired military brass Internal volume may differ

VERDICT

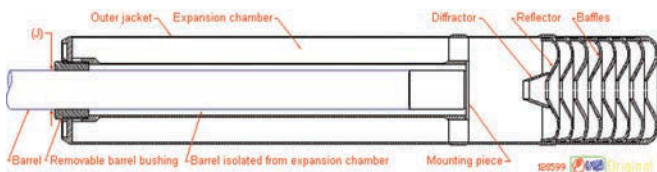
Worth a look Headstamps and dates can vary

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[HUNTING]

Typical morning's upland shooting with random birds just popping out of the bush; hot and tiring work but great fun



It ain't HALF Hot Mum!

Pete Moore continues with his bird shooting trip courtesy of Browning on the launch of their Maxus semi-auto shotgun

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Sleeping for an hour after 16-hours continuous travel was a mistake, better to have stayed up, but we coffee'd up and got on the road. The hunting took the form of walked-up in the morning that would see us pushing across the bush with its rutted and iron hard ground, flushing birds like francolin, guinea fowl and others I did not recognise, some looking a bit like snipe, another like a turkey, as we went. In the afternoon we drove to waterholes for doves, which were plentiful, with the game being fast and furious. We each got a tracker who carried our kit and picked up for us.

One curious aspect of the trackers was they did not pick up live birds that had been shot. They seemed almost frightened to touch them, instead they all carried a small stick and killed the wounded by banging them repeatedly on the head. Guess it must be a local thing!

I'm not a big fan of heat but can cope, or so I thought, but the temperature was approaching 40° by 09.00 and it was hard work. Worst was the rutted ground, which seemed to have been ploughed, with the furrows too close together to walk easily, yet two were too far apart for a big stride. Adding to this was the tangle foot vegetation that was forever tripping us up.

WATCH AND SHOOT

That aside it was good fun with plenty of birds getting flushed, I shot my first francolin missing with the first round but connecting with the second and ended up getting three that morning. Then disaster struck and I fell over and smacked the hell out of my left knee, so had to limp along for the rest of the trip. When we got back to the trucks there were coolers full of cold beer that never tasted so good!

Nice was the fact that all the birds we shot were turned into meals, which was most agreeable, in fact we eat very well over the whole time there. But for me as a part time shotgunner the afternoons were the best, as we were shooting doves.



Photo opportunity – this is how they live out in the bush

This was different from the gruelling morning treks across the parched bush. We drove in a motley collection of 4x4s to the pools. Mainly Toyota Land Cruisers and a Mk 1 Range Rover, with the roof cut off – bet they never thought of that of that when it rolled off the production line at Solihull? With just rutted dirt tracks full of holes the journeys were memorable and the sweet/sickly smell of petrol from leaky fuel lines was unforgettable. As were the driving skills of our trackers!

RAM IT!

We came to a dried up stream bed about 4ft deep and wide, the driver took a run at it and

literally smacked the front wheels onto the opposite bank and revved the balls of the engine to force the nose up. It worked every time as we had to cross that obstacle six times in all and the vehicles made it. Another time with four trackers on top the driver took a corner too hard and they all flew off, with one breaking an arm! We all stopped and much like a soldiers wicked sense of humour; all the unharmed trackers gathered round their wounded comrade and laughed; nothing changes!

Even out in the bush we would meet people walking day and night, equally kids dressed in freshly washed white shirts and grey shorts walking miles to the school, but all carrying their shoes in their hands to doubtless save wear and tear.

PETE MOORE SAYS:
“Sleeping for an hour after 16-hours continuous travel was a mistake”

TARGET-RICH ENVIRONMENT

At about 16.30 the doves started coming in to the water and that was when the fun started. The sky was black with them and I reckon I learned more about shotgunning that day than I ever had. OK I missed a lot, but soon discovered I shot best with my left



DESIGNED BY
NIGHT MASTER

Tracker with dead bird, the stick is to kill the wounded as they will not touch them when they are thrashing around; weird



Doves are now probably my favourite shotgun sport and I got quite good at bagging them, the Maxus proved a great gun



Slash & burn, subsistence farmers just cut down the bush and burn what's left, the smell is all pervading

The Gouverneur, with his free shotgun held in a death grip, Till Cussman on the right



eye closed and with some trial and error sorted out what worked for me. I recall the Maxus banging in my shoulder and the ease of which I could reload and my tracker running back to the vehicle for more ammo. I was in the zone!

It was here that I really started to appreciate one of the Maxus' best features – the speed feed. When the gun empties the action locks open like any other semi. However, rather than having to drop a round into the ejection port and press the bolt release, you just push it into the magazine where the mechanism automatically feeds it. This means you can keep the gun up scanning for targets; this got me a lot more birds than if I had been using a conventional self-loader!

The next day we were back to the walked-up in the morning, with more of the same and me gamely limping along. I took more birds, all the time adding to my ability. Moving through the bush we encountered families in mud huts and rondovals, who lived by subsistence farming and little else, along with the ever present smell of slash & burn land clearance. One incident I will always remember was the crocodile!

Often the bush would clear into a partially dried out lake, one of the shooters was walking over a water-filled pool and decided to step on what looked like a log, only to discover he was on the back of a crocodile! He was terrified as was another not far away who just turned and ran, laugh... This is what I like about Africa, as things you have read about actually happen. I remember

being in South Africa in 2005 and getting to hold a lion cub at a reserve. I had read that lions have a very distinctive smell and this baby had it too, you could just imagine that drifting down on the wind spooking the plains game. Or smelling it yourself in the long grass and wondering what might be coming!

JUMBO

On the point of wild life, on the way back we stopped at an elephant reserve and were sipping beer on the terrace watching these massive creatures in a lake, awesome. Driving back we saw more in the bush. One of our party, a Greek, got out of the truck and started walking towards an old bull with his camera clicking. I remember shouting at him to get back in, but he seemed oblivious of the danger, but the trackers got him back in one piece. Then a massive group of baboons by the side of the road, I have to say they are vicious and scary looking creatures. Though in all that time I did not see one antelope or similar.

At midday the governor of the province came to see us with his entourage for a meal. Truck loads of armed guards arrived first and I could see the locals were a little afraid. He turned up in a white, Toyota Land Cruiser with a personalised number plate that said Gouverneur (pimp my ride or what?). Til Cussman, the head of the trip, presented him with a Maxus, which he never let go of all the time he was there. It was an interesting meal...

THE TRIPLE

In the afternoon my best ever on doves, I had been knocking them down with regularity and just as the light was failing I got a triple. I heard a piping noise and three of them flashed over my right shoulder. I must have been on auto pilot as I swung the gun and as cool as you like and dropped all of them one after the other. I don't know who was more surprised me or the tracker. Then it was all over, with a big party with the locals that night and the option of having a lay in, which I took as my leg was still giving me gyp.

On the drive back two final adventures, the first was the Burkina Independence Day celebrations and we were in a big town with all the people in their finery with bands playing etc., which was great to see. Then on the road we came on a big lorry on its side that had hit a herd of cattle, some were dead others staggering around wounded or stunned. I reckon the dead and wounded ended up in the larder... Good old Browning they know how to lay on the entertainment! Finally we stopped at the same shanty town we had on the first night and sitting by the road sipped cold beers watching the life around us and being watched with equal interest.

Overall an excellent trip, good shooting, lots of targets, great people and some amazing experiences. The Maxus well – bloody great gun, reliable and easy to shoot, so much so I bought one a few months later and still use it today. Would I go again, definitely! My thanks to the Browning crew for including me in a real African adventure!

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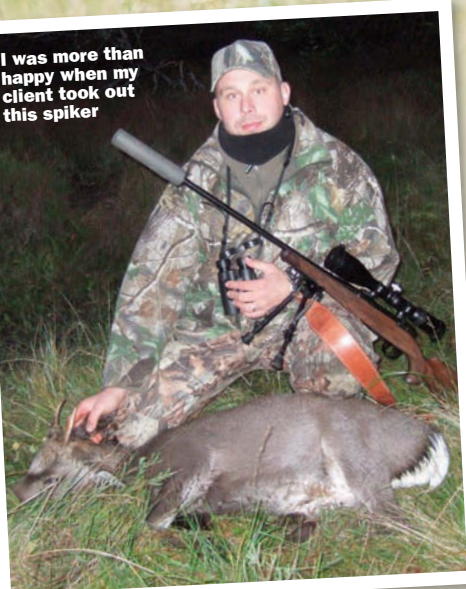
The Rut Sets In!

Howard spells out some of the problems when running a sporting estate

What may look like broken down unkempt woodland is the perfect habitat for sika



I was more than happy when my client took out this spiker



If you're thinking of paying out for sporting rights on land to take out clients and make some money, take advice or risk falling on your face as well as being out of pocket! It seems like a good idea, but there's more to it than that. Stalkers will find that prices vary significantly from one place to another. A well run estate as well as taking a wage out of your fee for the privilege to stalk also has to put a percentage towards maintenance. High seats, cutting and clearing, signs to ensure ramblers stick to the paths etc are just some considerations, as not many think of what goes on behind the scenes. You pay your fee and want to be shown deer!

EXTRA CASH

But that's not always possible even when the keeper goes out to locate quarry to give you

the best possible chance, believe me I know! This year due to the cost of maintenance I thought I would take on some paying guests to offset costs, which I don't normally do. I just happen to have picked the wrong year, due to the unusually warm weather (mid October). I was sat on the hill dressed in light clothing it was that warm, and though the leaves were changing colour the trees were still holding on to them while the ferns were still standing six feet high in places normally by this time of year we would of at least had some hard frost if not snow to knock them down and help strip the trees of their leaves not to mention help bring the rut on.

A similar thing happened with the roe, a few years ago, the rut had finished before anyone had realised it had even begun. This



Scent hound and handler if any ones going to have to shoot over his dog it will be him!



Wallows like this are a good sign that the rut is in progress and there's a stag in the vicinity



year it was the sika, only hearing the odd whistle from the stags a little like 'not tonight deer (sic) I've got a headache'. To give you an idea - one estate had one sika stag for 25-stalks while another had 14 for 82, mine were no better.

However, I am luckier as I don't make a living out of it; the land I look after is more recreational for me with more habitat and conservation in mind (deer control) with the control of other pest species being part of that. But much can go wrong! It's bad enough when a guest passes up a chance because he wants the trophy of all trophy's which means the estate only gets the stalking fee no trophy fee and also loses out on the trophy preparation. Not to mention the revenue on the venison but if the weather is against you it could spell disaster, so making a living on the sporting alone is hard even if you have put down pheasants which is a big investment not just in hard cash but also in man hours.

LAND = MONEY?

I find more people are thinking of taking on a piece of land hoping to turn it into a money earner so felt compelled to spell out some of the problems. Even if the revenue made is only to pay for the land the following year you can only take so many deer off, which will create a vacuum that won't be filled over

night. So if you like stalking what are you going to stalk after your guests have bagged their trophies? I have three estates in the Inverness area and also help out at another but still found it hard to find the stags this year. Even calling didn't have much effect though things did start to pick up a little towards the end of my second week.

A Polish hunter got a nice six pointer, after two well placed shots he found it hard to believe that the stag showed no signs of a hit, when it finally went down, we found two perfect heart shots. His friend took a two year old spiker. While it was not the trophy he wanted he did me a service by taking it out - estate policy is; if it's in season then take it as the surrounding forestry is so thick it's impossible to stalk. It also holds a lot of deer that inveterately cause damage on my ground so as a good will gesture I gave him the venison to take home.

I had a new comer to the sport with only one roe under his belt for six stalks. Our first was in an area heavily populated with sika and roe to give him his best possible chance of a trophy. Within half an hour looking across a small valley a number of sika hinds showed followed by a stag sporting eight points facing us some 100 yards. He was prone off a bipod and I said shoot ►

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► when ready, but nothing happened. I said take the shot as he was not going to stay much longer and to place the shot at the bottom of his neck.

HIT & MISSING

He replied he wanted it to turn broadside on and how far was it? I replied put the cross hairs smack on the bottom of the neck, just then the stag turned broadside on and immediately fell to the report of his 308! Hinds went off in all directions we waited a few minutes before standing to make our way towards the fallen stag when I saw the side view of a deer make off through the



A good all round trophy showing all points are even in circumference and length

thick cover - I just hoped it wasn't our stag but it was.

We found traces of blood then nothing and called the search off after an hour, on our way back to our b & b I asked if he had the chance again would he do anything different – no he said! To be fair he did what get's drilled into all stalkers - wait until it turns broadside on for a heart shot, but the heart is the same size no matter what angle the deer is at. It's that target area you should be looking at not the whole deer, remember it's not in your guide's best interest to instruct or advise you wrong!

We returned the next day with an old dog to try and track it but the ground was too hard. Not wanting to give up I made a call to the United Kingdom Scent Hound Association formed in 2012 for the sole purpose of tracking lost or wounded deer and boar. Currently they provide the service free of charge though I would not expect someone to set off in the early hours of the morning travel for two hours to look for a wounded deer in bad weather without showing my appreciation in some way.

The hound was on the scent within minutes even though it was a Friday evening when the deer was wounded and it was now Sunday morning the trail took us up through



Cleaning and preparing trophy's is all part of the service (at a small cost)

the wood onto the moor were we came across a pile of guts. I can only assume someone on the neighbouring estate came across it and did the right thing. I can't praise Steve and his hound enough for coming to our rescue and I wish the UKSHA all the best.

Contact: United Kingdom Scent Hound Association, 07733200355 or 07946747075 ukshasecretary@outlook.com

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WAY WAY OUT YONDER!

Join **Bruce Potts** as he indulges in some extreme varminting with a case and calibre combo of impeccable pedigree



Minimum recoil and maximum performance is a nice combination

Most shooters recognise the .22 and 6mm PPC series of cartridges jointly developed by Dr Louis Palmisano and Ferris Pindell in 1974 as the two best out there. Their inception completely changed the way we thought about design/performance and put to rest the myth that bigger was better! These are short and extremely efficient achieving extreme accuracy and consistency for minimal input. Just because it was originally designed for Bench Rest does not mean it does not have a place in the fields of Britain as a superb pest/varmin cartridge!

RATIONALE

The .17 PPC is just one incarnation of the PPC case the most popular being .22 and

6mm, although .20 is also good and the 6.5 version now modernised into the 6.5 Grendel is really turning heads too.

Being a .17 calibre (0.172") you are looking at bullets ranging from 15 to 37-grains which practically speaking means velocities from 3600-4600 fps' which is quite staggering! But there is no pain without gain, the differing weights will require specific rifling twists for optimum stability, also too much velocity just tears a bullet apart due to the incredible forces of rotational spin generated at these speeds. However this all spells trouble for vermin as the heavier the bullet weight the higher the ballistic coefficient increases and that means the better it slips through the variable air densities on its way to the game.

The Berger 37-grain VLD (Very Low Drag) bullet has a better BC (ballistic coefficient) of 0.343 than a 243, 75-grain V-MAX projectile. Equally the 30-grain Wood Chuck Den Gold boat tail offers a BC of 0.270 similar to a 60-grain V-MAX .224 bullet value. It also utilises a more regular 1 in 9 twist and therefore could be used for all the other available .17 calibre bullets and could be driven up to 4150 fps without any problems! The reason being the .17's are lighter and can be driven faster but have a better BC due to their long/slim shape, which pays off dividends down range.

The 37-grain Berger is seriously specialised and requires a super fast 1 in 6 twist barrel to stabilise it correctly and can only be pushed at a maximum of 3600 fps



(Left to Right) .17 AK Hornet, .220 Russian case, .17 PPC, 6mm PPC, .17 Rem, .20BR

before it comes apart. However, I have a Pac Nor barrel for my RPA just coming to fruition as this is written but my initial attention is toward the lighter weights. Berger have now discontinued the 37-grain VLD, rotters!

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The PPC case head is an awkward size at 0.445" so the bolt head might require some small modifications to function properly. So speak to your gunsmith about suitable donor actions before going ahead. My rifle is a Venom Arms custom I have been running for more than 14 years now, and the barrel still has life in it! Essentially this is a Wildcat cartridge and not commercially available so a degree of case preparation is necessary. Well; quite a lot really but you have come to expect that of me now.

All that is required is a bit of time and patience. The .17 PPC will start life as a .220 Russian case and only requires a small modification to achieve the .17 form. You can resize using a two die-forming set from RCBS to reduce the neck's internal diameter from .224" to .172". I actually used a .22 PPC neck die with removable bushes of 0.240, 0.235, 0.229, 0.220, 0.212" to reduce the parent brass's neck. At this stage I ran all the cases through a .17 PPC full length die and then uniformed the neck diameters with a K&M neck expander.

Always be sure to use sufficient lube to stop cases sticking in your precious dies. Imperial sizing wax is great although Royal Case and Die Lube is equally good!

Because the brass will thicken as the neck is reduced you will need to neck turn to achieve the correct clearance with that of your rifle's chamber. I specified a reamer to cut a 0.197" neck and so a loaded round would have to have a neck diameter of 0.195" to give the necessary 0.002" clearance for precise bullet release. K&M neck turners give a uniform neck diameter and then all that is then needed is to fire-form the brass and the characteristic PPC case is formed.

FIRST FIRINGS

The .17 PPC case being small and squat actually likes the medium powder burn rates which include Reloder 15, Varget,

Whether as a static long range vermin rifle or a walk and stalk crow and fox gun the .17 PPC cartridge is a superbly flat shooting and accurate round



"The PPC case head is an awkward size at 0.445" so the bolt head might require some small modifications to function properly"

Benchmark and Vit N135. I like small fast bullets especially for crow or rabbit sized vermin and so the obvious starting load used Hornady's 20-grain V-MAX bullets, which are dependable performers in down range frangibility and inherent accuracy.

I now use Reloder 15 powder with a top load of 25-grains pushing the 20 V-MAX at 4627 fps. At these velocities the primer pockets can expand and .17's are notoriously pressure sensitive so increase the charge in 0.25-grains increments only! Ok at these speeds barrel life is a concern, but performance-wise that's 400fps faster than a .17 Remington!



A 20-grain Hornady V-MAX travelling at 4627 fps is incredibly fast and dare I say it effective?

The 20-grain Bergers also performed similarly to the V-MAX although I could up the charge to 25.5-grains of Reloder 15 to achieve 4688 fps before any pressure signs. The 25-grain Hornady's or Bergers again with Reloder 15 and a charge of 26 grains achieved 4307 fps whilst 27-grains of Varget produced 4344 fps. Both are hollow points although in test I have found the Bergers more accurate and consistent.

SHINE ON

Where the .17 PPC really shines is with heavier 30-grain projectiles. However there are few choices outside the world of specialist bullet makers. The Berger is the obvious choice, its flat base hollow point design works well, although I have had problems with some of them not expanding readily.

With 24.5 grains of Hodgdon Benchmark powder a velocity of 3963 fps makes it very useful as a fox load and another 0.5-grain pushes it over the 4000 fps barrier at 4089 fps. But I like to push the envelope and I have been using some specialist 30-grainers from Wood Chuck Den Gold. The difference between these and the Bergers is the Gold's have a very high BC of 0.270 due to their thin and boat tailed design. This makes them very wind slippery with less drift at longer ranges, plus retains more velocity too. Which is just perfect for a long range performer like the .17 PPC.

With such a flat trajectory distant foxes or crows can be shot at with great confidence, only the wind drift needs to be corrected for.



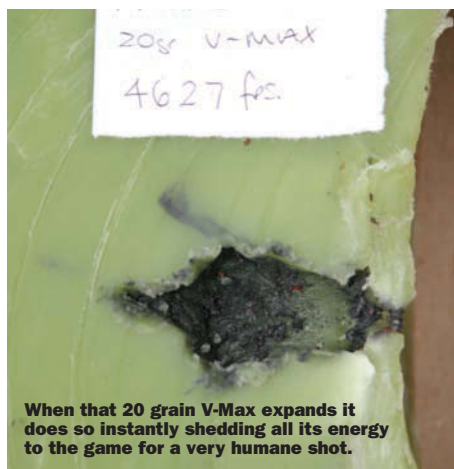
Although the .17PPC is a Wildcat and needs case forming and specialised reloading all the kit is available and the benefits from performance are worth it.

I have used both Benchmark and Reloder 15 powder and these days I have found the latter to be more consistent. With a starting load of 24-grains gets you a mild yet accurate 3834 fps. But I want maximum performance and increases of 0.25-grains at a time give 3891, 3930, 3978 and finally 4073 fps for a maximum load of 25-grains. You can push this to 4100 fps but case life is better at 4000 fps so I have erred on the safe side.

DOWN RANGE PERFORMANCE.

As an all-round practical vermin tool it is hard to beat the 20-grain V-Max, when launched at 4627 fps drop is minimal:

100 yards	200	300	400	500
Zero	- 0.4"	- 3.9"	- 11.5"	- 29"



When that 20 grain V-Max expands it does so instantly shedding all its energy to the game for a very humane shot.

Switch to the heavier but more ballistically efficient 30-grain Gold bullet and whilst the velocity is down by 600 fps you have an almost identical trajectory path but still retaining more energy down range. At 200 yards it has 695 ft/lbs when compared to the 462 ft/lbs of the faster/lighter 20 V-MAX.

This is not the whole story as accuracy will be the determining factor in bullet choice and with velocities this high rifling wear around the chambers throat will be accelerated. Fouling too can become a problem if you have cheap barrel or shoot large numbers at a time! But I use the 17 PPC as a one shot ultra long range crow or fox gun were I might only get one shot any way and its lightning speed and fast trajectory is just what you need.

CONCLUSION

Obviously the .17 PPC is not for everyone as there is a lot of case manipulation prior to any shooting. But when you have been in this game as long as I have the challenge and expectation outweighs any tedious chores from case forming. In truth it's a superbly consistent and intrinsically accurate calibre from the off primarily due to its bench rest lineage.

Some cartridges are just like that, and the .17PPC achieves accurate and guaranteed humane one shot kills and at



some astonishing ranges too! Just because it's a small bullet do not dismiss it as inadequate that would be fool hardy. Let the rifle and the raw ballistics be the proof of the pudding not second hand tales from people who have never shot a .17!

CONTACTS

Swift Precision Rifles (ex venom)	01527 871620
Wood Chuck Den, dies and bullets	woodchuckden.com
R.Macleods, s/h Sako AI action	01862 892171
Pac-Nor barrels	pacnor.com
Norman Clark, bullets powers primers	01788 579651
Wenig, custom gunstocks	wenig.com
Zeiss Optics, sports optics	01223 401500
Tim Hannam, .220 cases and Vit powder	01977 681639
Edgar Brothers, Hornady bullets, powder	01625 613177



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PRODUCTION PRESSURE

Wheelwrite considers the choices of reloading press available

What's the best reloading press? A bit of qualification is necessary to make some sense of it. The vast majority of designs share a number of common features, not least of which is the size of dies that can be fitted to them. The default thread size is $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 14 TPI (threads per inch) diameter. If you require something bigger make sure the machine comes with an adaptor for this thread. This is common with most leading brands has a screw-off insert to suit.

Power is provided by a compound leverage system that gives good mechanical advantage to move a steel piston (ram) up and down to which the case mounts by a removable shell holder. Almost all press bodies (the frame) are constructed from either cast aluminium or cast iron with a few fabricated from machined and cast components held together with rods, nuts and bolts. To ease movement simple bearings are fitted on the fulcrum and where the ram travels through the frame. Most common are self lubricating Oilite sintered bronze designs, a highly compressed mix of metal powder usually impregnated with an SAE30 lubricant. These are ideal for the

19th century Frankford Arsenal machine; we've been doing this for a long time now...



O-frame, single station machine, probably the best choice for beginners and experts, this is a Lee Classic Cast, note the compound leverage system!



purpose but are easily wrecked by the ingress of crud from the case prep process, especially primer residues. Cleanliness is essential.

BEST, CHEAPEST AND MOST ACCURATE

There are a number of design options that relate to production capabilities and design. Most common is the single station machine. That is a single ram to mount a shell-holder and a single threaded hole for the die. There are two build-styles the C and O-frames. The C is open at the front giving good access but with less integrity so it can flex under the extremes pressures created by processing the case. The O offers a full frame and is far stronger/rigid though with slightly less front access, but is really the best choice.

Most are primarily designed for right handed use, a few have a frame offset and operating handle mounting that make left handed use more practical. Some manufacturers offer a compromise solution that allows the operating handle to be



Lyman T-Mag II turret press, note the single ram and the rotary, multi-station tool head, it's one way of upping production

mounted to the left or right. These presses are amongst the lightest, most portable and are ideally suited to low volume, high accuracy ammunition production. If your batch requirements never exceed 100-rounds, or your annual usage is less than 500 then these are the designs for you. If you're new to reloading I would strongly recommend that you start with one of these, regardless of your aspirations.

PROGRESSIVELY MORE COMPLEX

Our final category embraces the progressive family of presses, subdivided into manually indexed (including turret), auto indexing, hybrid and motorised designs. Turret models are best described as multi station 'C' presses and generally feature a standard ram and shell-holder configuration. However the top of the frame has a rotating indexing plate with (usually) between four and seven tool and die stations normally in $\frac{7}{8}$ x 14 TPI. Closed frame versions often have an interchangeable plate or disc multi tool holder in the top of the frame. These



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progressive. The
multi-station
shell plate
rotates and the
dies are fitted
in a QD plate
set in the top,
500-rounds per
hour is possible!



Forster Co Ax a
little different but
a good machine

models represent best cost/benefit to those who only reload reasonable quantities of a single design of single cartridge and can 'set and forget' the machine. However, a single pull of the handle only produces one function, slowing the production process.

Progressives offer one round for every cycle of the operating lever, which is impressive. My upgraded Dillon RL 550B being a good example of the genre. Instead of a single shell-holder we have an indexing shell plate that is turned under the fixed position four station die holder. Standard dies can be used with the proviso that a 'through-the-die' powder dispenser must be installed in the neck expanding station. It's good for 5,000 to 10,000 rounds per year. Remember that you get a lot less 'feel' with these types of machine, meaning that any issue with case neck condition, runt bullets or damaged primers may not be obvious



Double header from Herter, note this is a
C-frame design

until you find powder all over the floor or try and chamber the round. Speed of production does not make up for bad operation; here you can count your mistakes in 100s if you get it wrong!

Auto indexing and motor drive progressives are at a wholly different production level. They're really dedicated to massive production quantities of a single calibre using new brass. Costs reflect their complexity and level of performance. Unless you own a factory or intend to spend every daylight hour on the range then they're not for you.

HYBRID AND SPECIAL PURPOSE

Super portable designs like the Lyman Acculine that employ standard dies but operate like crude chest expanders are at the minimalist end. Dedicated lightweight designs for non-resizing bench-rest use include the tiny Harrell's Precision Compact calibre specific BR models. Cheap, good and effective is Lee's hand Press, which is a scissors-type design and can easily re-size fired cases too.

Reloading presses have been around since the late 19th Century, one of the oldest coming from the engineers at Frankford Arsenal. These early designs were often single calibre and commonly based on an arbor process where the tool or tool station

is pulled down the main pillar of the machine, often employing a compound lever system that gave a huge mechanical advantage at the expense of limited linear travel. Presses from Hollywood, Wamadet, Star Universal and Dunbar come to mind. Ironically, RCBS have recently reinvented the wheel, claiming their new and expensive Summit moving die arbor press to be 'innovative'. Hmm.

One novelty was the Herter's Super Model 81, a C-frame with side-by-side stations and twin shell holders. CH4D (Champ) still produce their hefty Model 444 double arbor 'H' machine as well as their Champion, one of the beefiest O-frames around and featuring interchangeable 1" and 7/8" thread inserts.

CONTACTS

Major Importers:

Lee Precision - Henry Krank & Co Ltd, 0113 256 9163

www.leeprecision.com

Hornady - Edgar Brothers Ltd, 01625 613177

www.hornady.com

Lyman & Forster - Hannam's Reloading, 01977 681639

www.lymanproducts.com

RCBS - GMK Ltd, 01489 579999

www.rcbs.com

Specialised Retailers:

Reloading Solutions Limited, 01865 378200

www.reloadingsolutions.com

Norman Clark Gunsmiths, 01788 579651

www.normanclarkgunsmith.com

CASE HISTORIES: 25-20 WINCHESTER

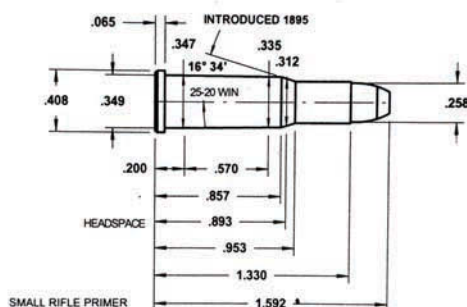
OLD TIMER

Wheelwrite takes a look at a real old timer from the transitional time of black to smokeless powder

During the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, one arms company above all others was responsible for the introduction of a bewildering range of metallic centrefire cartridges. Even more confusing was the seemingly duplicated performance produced by many sub-groups within these designs. Almost all were intended for use in their burgeoning range of repeating rifles and most had their roots in the use of black powder. Hence the mind numbing nomenclatures. In no particular order, .32-20, .44-40, .45-60, .45-70, .32-40, .38-40, .38-55, .38-56, .38-70, .38-72, .40-65, .40-72 and on and on. Yup, you've worked it out, Winchester. The headstamps often reading WCF, (Winchester Center Fire).

PAPER THIN

Our chosen child from this era is the .25-20 Winchester (aka 25-20 WCF). It's parent was the 1882 .32-20 Winchester, aka .32 WCF, not that this was the first to wear the .25-20 badge, as a single shot wildcat pre-dated it by almost a decade and was probably the inspiration for the Winchester design). Introduced somewhere between 1892 and 1895, the paper thin rimmed .32-20 case was necked down to accommodate an 86-grain, .258" flat-nosed lead pill. The 20-grain black powder charge generating 1460 fps.



25-20 WCF schematic, rimmed and bottler-necked that's how they made them back then!

A slightly later 'high velocity' variant using a 60-grain SP was also listed, quoting 2250 fps but with no confirmation of the charge weight (probably early nitro). Bullet design reflected Winchesters intended use in a new chambering in their Model 1892 Lever Action. Aimed at the small/medium game and varmint market it soon became a popular backwoods rifle and cartridge combo. Whilst modest exterior ballistics limited the practical working range to between 75 and 100 yards the scale of the market encouraged other rifle builders to chamber it.

However, whilst Marlin offered their Models 1889 and 1894 in .25-20 WCF they later introduced a rifle chambering and matching cartridge in .25-20 MARLIN. On the face of it they have the same design and ballistics. In addition to Winchester, other ammo makers have made it, but over time the bullet diameter has become .257" and the range of weights and loadings extended to span 50 to 100-grains.

NICHE FOREVER

There has always been a buoyant collector market for arms chambered for the old WCF cartridges, especially lever actions, ensuring that both tools and materials will continue to be available. The .25-20 WCF certainly qualifies as one of these stars, especially since there were chamberings in not only a diverse range of rifles but several models of revolver. So a great candidate for S7 collector/shooters handguns. Furthermore, there are suitable comps for classic long guns too.

On the loading bench the usual warnings apply. Only use truncated bullet designs in any tube mag guns, be wary of modern nitro loads in early rifles and take account of the .001" change in bullet diameter from the original WCF design. If you're going to revive



This smokeless Rem-UMC pre-dates the Winchester launch

one of the old revolvers as a shooter, take heed of all the pressure warnings.

You'll find limited load data in a number of the manuals. Bullets in .257" are listed by several makers. Whilst I could find un-primed brass from Remington I could not find any new Winchester cases. Although modern brass is slightly more robust than the early examples, it is still quite flimsy, making light loading a sensible choice. Propellants are in the slow pistol/fast rifle region, including H4198, H110, 2400 and my favourite, IMR 4227. Tools are catalogued by Lee, Lyman, RCBS, Redding and Hornady. What are you waiting for? A true classic at a sensible price.

NEXT MONTH
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Time!



Detail of the three trigger adjusters that control pull, reset and disconnect travel

Pete Moore looks at two AR15 trigger kits from Spike's Tactical

Let's face it your basic AR15 trigger is a bit like walking up a set of steep stairs with a 60lb pack on your back; for that read – hard work! Then you get to the top and the floor disappears as you make the break. My A2 SGC Speedmaster was like this with what is best described as a workable, military trigger. OK for getting lead down range but, and given the accuracy potential of any well built AR, not ideal. Wanting to keep the price down I fitted as an interim measure a JP reduced power spring kit. It did little for the feel but it brought the pull down to far more useable levels and it works!

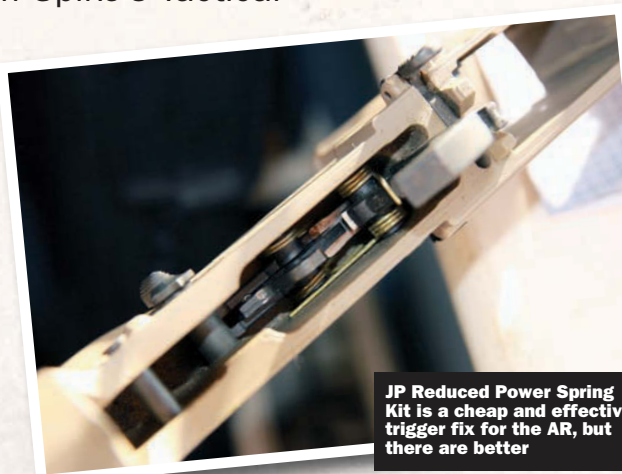
But I now feel I would like a bit more finesse and have started looking at AR triggers in general. There are a lot out there and speaking to Wayne Titterton (North West Custom Parts) about this he said he'd send two replacement kits from Spike's Tactical for my thoughts on them. Called the Enhanced Battle Trigger and the Enhanced Battle Trigger Mk II. Both represent price and performance in the

medium to high ends of the market.

WELL FETTED

Components are made from hammer-forged 8620 tool steel, heat-treated, and feature a smooth and tough matte Nickel Boron finish. In the case of the Mk II weight has been reduced by milling out sections from the side of the hammer and also skeletonising the disconnecter.

The Battle Trigger is very much the standard AR unit only with precisely cut and shaped sear and notch to give a crisp release. Weight I reckon was around the 4-5 lb mark, which is firm, however the break is clean and a reduced spring kit will drop that down to suit. But for CSR (Civilian Service Rifle) use is about spot on for Service Optic class! This comes fitted with all springs, disconnecter along with two axis pins.



JP Reduced Power Spring Kit is a cheap and effective trigger fix for the AR, but there are better

The Enhanced Mk II is all together more sophisticated. The trigger body is machined to accept three, Allan-headed studs (included) that allow you to set up the movement for pull, reset and disconnect travel. You do not have to fit them but without you do get a small amount of take-up/creep before the break. When fitted and adjusted correctly the mech feels almost dead, with minimum movement, before during



Clever, the brass, screw-on tip that makes fitting the shorter trigger pin easy!



Standard Enhanced Battle Trigger gives around a 4-5 lb pull along with a crisp break, a JP spring kit will drop the weight a bit too

“The hammer is fitted with a JP 3.5T (red) spring that gives a pull of around 3.5-4lbs”

and after and feels excellent. There's no over travel or long, graunchy take up just a solid pressure that goes on to a crisp, readable break.

Another plus is the KNS Gen 2 Mod ST anti-rotation pin set. The trigger and hammer axis pins on an AR can work sideways if not retained and could get lost or render the mech inoperable. My SGC Speedmaster has a tiny circlip on the end of the pin; the KNS adopts a different approach!

LOCKED AND SOLID

One pin has raised lugs at each end and the other is drilled and threaded for countersunk screws, two connector plates with compatible ends are included. With the trigger fitted locate the lugged end with the socket in the plate then position the other end over the threaded hole and screw them together, repeat with the other side and you're done. One clever item is a pointed brass tip that screws into the shorter/threaded trigger pin, its shape

allows it to be inserted and align the hammer as it's pushed through the side of the receiver and axis hole.

The hammer is fitted with a JP 3.5T (red) spring that gives a pull of around 3.5-4lbs, not silly light but a good trigger none the less and combined with the precision components and the ability to reduce trigger movement to a minimum offers a nice set up. It comes with all tools required and thread locking compound.

STRIP OUT, PUT IN

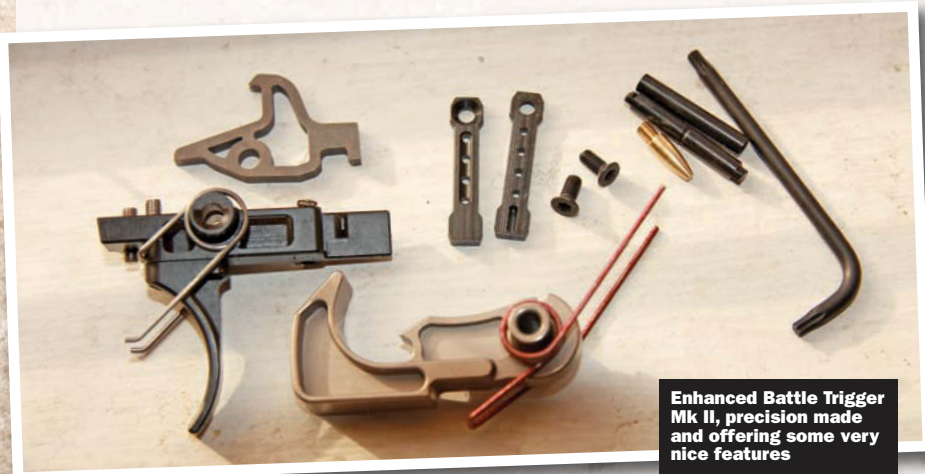
Changing out an AR trigger mechanism is not that hard. You will need a long, 1/8" pin punch and an extended 3/16 Allen key to undo the pistol grip bolt. Though a T30 Torx drive on a long bar will also do the job!

Start by dropping the hammer and removing the lower receiver and laying it down 'grip-up'. Then undo the pistol grip and lift it off. Be careful here as there's a

spring and plunger underneath that retains the safety catch. Remove these and then the safety from right to left.

It's now just a matter of drifting out the hammer and trigger axis pins with the 1/8" punch. Note the rear pin that passes through the trigger assembly also holds the disconnecter catch. Both hammer and trigger will be under a bit of spring pressure and also note how the springs wrap. In the case of the trigger the two open arms lie flat and forward along the floor of the receiver to tension the trigger. The hammer has a U-shaped end that sits behind the body with the two open ends pushing up and sitting on shelves on either side of the trigger pivot point.

Position the new trigger back inside and locate the disconnecter over the coil spring and push down and insert the pin punch. You can now insert the axis pin and with a little wiggle of the punch all the components will align. The same holds for the hammer but you will need to exert more pressure to keep it in place. With that done and any pin locking arrangements set, re-fit the safety catch plunger and spring and screw on the pistol grip and it's job done!



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The Dry Heaves

Pete Moore details how to get that stuck case from your sizing die if you forget the golden rule

Re-sizing/de-capping is the worst job in the reloading process as it requires the most effort. One thing to remember is that you are forcing an over-sized brass cylinder into an under-sized steel tube so case lube is essential, if you skip that bit you're into a world of hurt!

HEAVE & PRAY

It goes like this - the case goes in and feels a bit stiff, do you back off, do you hell, as you know brute force will do the job. Suddenly it all stops and as you go to pull the offending brass out that's when the steel shell holder slices off the rim! Now you're screwed! But a handy little item from RCBS is at hand - the stuck case remover! Mine has got me out of trouble many times and costs less than a new re-sizing die each time!

The first job is to remove the de-capping rod, expander and pin. Depending

"The case goes in and feels a bit stiff; do you back off? Do you hell!"

Case unstuck note the steel cup and screw, also the mangled state of the rim

Getting a stuck case out of the re-sizing die need not be a pain, then again if you use lube it will not happen!

on the design of die the de-capping pin is held by a collar and usually it can be unscrewed and the rod removed. If not the whole rod assembly can be dropped back as far as the interior of the shoulder. The kit consists of a 1/4 UNC (Unified National Coarse) tap, 7/32nd drill, Allan bolt and key and steel socket.

THAT'S THE DRILL

Place the die, base-up in a padded vice and drill out the primer pocket. Then thread the hole, the tap is tapered so starts easily, you don't need a proper stock as a small adjustable spanner will do. Once threaded place the steel socket over the case head (hole up) and screw the bolt down through into the brass. When engaged wind in the bolt which will pull the case out, you might need some form of lever to get enough effort, as that sucker will be tight!

The final act is to carefully cut the case in half so you can recover the expander ball and de-capping pin and you're done. Now put the extractor away as you will need it again, trust me! A DIY alternative is to get a piece of steel tubing wide enough to sit on top of the die and some washers to act as the top. A 1/4 UNC bolt can be used as the remover and a spanner to turn it. Tap and drill as before. I have always used the RCBS kit, but most manufacturers offer something similar.

The RCBS Stuck Case Remover an essential tool for your reloading bench and not expensive either

↑ FOR
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↓ AGAINST
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→ VERDICT
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TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

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